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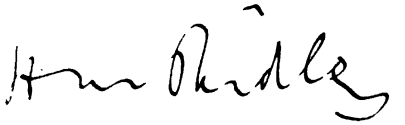

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The Hunting Library

EDITED BY

F. G. AFLALO, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

VOLUME III.

THE MASTER OF HOUNDS

The Hunting Library

Edited by F. G. AFLALO, F.R.G.S.

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FOX-HUNTING IN THE SHIRES

BY

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THE MASTER OF HOUNDS

BY

G. F. UNDERHILL

Author of "A Century of Fox-Hunting"
With contributions by Lord Ribblesdale, Lt.-Colonel G. C. Ricardo, Arthur Heinemann, John Scott, &c.

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THE
MASTER OF HOUNDS

BY

G. F. UNDERHILL

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY
LORD RIBBLESDALE, LT.-COL. G. C. RICARDO
ARTHUR HEINEMANN, JOHN SCOTT, ETC.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS, the third volume of "The Hunting Library," deals with a subject at once more simple and more complex than that covered by its predecessors; more simple because its scope is determined by a review of the personality, the duties and the difficulties of a single official; more complex because, if we are to contemplate any approach to a proper estimate of all that the Master of Hounds means in the social and sporting world, it is necessary to consider his privileges and obligations not merely from his own standpoint, but also from those of his followers, farmers or otherwise, and his servants. To a complete understanding of his merits, indeed, a word from the hounds would be essential, but short of that it is hoped that something has been accomplished in the following pages to show the Master as he sees himself and also as others see him.

The main portion of this volume was the work of Mr. Underhill, who needed no introduction to hunting readers, and who applied himself to his task with his usual conscientious grasp of its responsibilities. Most unfortunately, this enthusiastic and painstaking writer died suddenly when he had

revised the greater portion of the proof. I have done my best with the remainder, but there was no time to submit the sheets, as I should have preferred, to some one better informed than myself on the technical details of the sport. I am only anxious that the author should be held blameless. In his chapters he embodied a number of interesting opinions contributed by Masters and others.

In addition, my friend Lt.-Col. G. C. Ricardo has written, out of the fulness of his knowledge of Craven expenditure over a period of years, an exhaustive chapter on the financial side of Mastership, no unimportant aspect to the newcomer in a strange country; while Mr. Arthur Heinemann, one of the most enthusiastic and most successful of living otter-hunters, has written on that sport in Essex and Devon, in both of which countries he has mastered important packs. It will perhaps be noticed that Masters of Harriers find no place in this book, but it was thought that, for one Library at any rate, Mr. Bryden had said all that there was to be said on the subject in his own volume on the sport, and any further notes must have been in the nature of repetition.

It remains only to thank Lord Ribblesdale, Mrs. Ricardo and others who have so kindly helped with both photographs and information, without which generous assistance, indeed, the volume could hardly have been produced.

F. G. A.

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CHAPTER I

THE MODERN SCHOOL OF FOX-HUNTING

The old style—"Capping"—Sporting writers and Masters of Hounds—Financial results of "capping"—Expenses of the Master—Shooting-tenants and fox-hunting—Conflicting interests—Gamekeepers—Views of Mr. Reginald Herbert—Letter from a gamekeeper—Ladies in the hunting-field—Riding schools for ladies—The late Empress of Austria—Ladies bicycling to meets—Cross-country riding in the army—German and Russian military hunts—Hunting-men in war—Attitude of the War Office.

Tempora mutantur. The old order changeth in fox-hunting as it doth in every other branch of sport. Even within my own recollection, which only extends back to 1870, the hunting-field was regarded as a social, sporting, agricultural club. In many instances the hunting-field presented the only opportunity that we possessed of holding intercourse with farmers, who leased land at a distance from our own residence. Furthermore, in those days the hunting-field afforded a means of communication between the large land-owners. We were all tainted with the same brush, namely, the brush of the fox, and we were proud when we were baptized with the blood from the brush. Not that the blood was *eau de Cologne* by any means from

the point of view of scent, though many of us consider the proudest moment of our lives that time when the huntsman daubed our cheeks before presenting us with the brush. I wonder what the modern exquisite, who never saw hounds till he was twenty years of age, would say, if he were suddenly "blooded"! At all events, I doubt whether he would consider it an honour. He would more probably anathematise the custom as a relic of the barbarous ages. Not only have the manners of the hunting-field changed, but a new class of hunting-people has arisen, who hunt not from any love of sport, but because they consider that it is the swagger thing to do. I allude to these people in another chapter, where I have emptied the vials of my wrath. Still, there can be no doubt that this influx of strangers has made it an imperative necessity that alterations should be made in the management of a Hunt. We, who have been accustomed to hunt under the old *régime*, may resent the alterations; but, as an M.F.H. lately said to me, we must do one of two things: we must have the alterations, or by fair means or foul we must expel the strangers from the hunting-field. Now the second alternative is a practical impossibility, unless we adopted the "ragging" methods which have disgraced certain of our regiments in the Army, and which, if put into force in the hunting-field, would be so many stones placed in the hands of the enemies of hunting to hurl at us. We must, therefore, accept the alterations which Masters of Hounds and Hunt Committees may think it necessary to make, though,

of course, we reserve to ourselves the right to criticise the alterations.

Perhaps the most important alteration is the resuscitation of the "capping" system. In February 1903 the hunting world was astonished by the decision of the powers who rule over the Pytchley and Warwickshire Hunts to enforce a "cap" of £2 per day against all non-residents who do not subscribe £25 per annum to the Hunt. Now, every Hunt has the undoubted right to conduct its internal policy as the members of the Hunt may think fit. Still, members of fashionable Hunts, such as the Pytchley and the Warwickshire, must remember that they owe certain obligations to the hunting community at large. The policy which they adopt is sure to be imitated by people who have not examined the local reasons for the policy. Thus, most of the fixtures of the Pytchley and the Warwickshire are convenient for Londoners. In regard to the Pytchley, Lord Althorp, who was Master from 1808 till 1817, long before the days of railways, after a late sitting at the House of Commons, which he considered that duty commanded him as a Lord of the Treasury to attend, would gallop from London to Northamptonshire to meet his hounds in the morning, the relays of horses on the road being always ready for him. In regard to the Warwickshire, Lord Middleton, who bought the hounds from Mr. John Corbet on February 9, 1811, and hunted them from Itchington Heath two days afterwards, abolished the club at Stratford-on-Avon on account of his dislike for sporting writers, more especially for hunting reporters. Certainly he

made an exception in the case of Mr. Edward Goulburn, the author of "The Epwell Run," whose reference to Sir Grey Skipwith,

> "Sufficiently forward, yet still keeping bounds,
> His wish to ride after, not over the hounds,"

has often been quoted as a warning to thrusting scoundrels. But Mr. Goulburn was rather a sporting poet than a sporting writer. Lord Middleton was a jealous man when jealousy was not only excusable but almost necessary. At the present time the reason for this jealousy does not exist, since the management of a hunting establishment has been reduced to an exact science, and the pedigree of a hound can be ascertained as easily as the pedigree of a Derby winner. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century such was not the case, and Masters of Hounds were naturally jealous lest the details of their kennel should become public property. We all have an antipathy, if I may use a slang phrase, to the process of having our brains picked by strangers without any remuneration. Now it is seldom that the stranger in the modern hunting-field, excepting the professional journalist, has come out with the idea of collecting information. I may add that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the stranger would not know how to utilise the information if he did collect it. There is the hundredth case, where a huntsman visits another country with the avowed object of learning something; but these visits are, as a rule, complimentary, and are not to be classed with the excursions of peripatetic fox-poachers.

There are numerous objections to the revival of the "capping" system, which for a few moments I wish to discuss dispassionately. In the first place, it has always been the favourite accusation of our enemies that hunting is essentially the sport of the wealthy man. I have always, since I first wrote about sport, protested strongly against the opinion that hunting was confined to the wealthy classes, and to that opinion I adhere. Now, if you are able to enforce this "cap" of £2, you will exclude many genuine sportsmen with limited incomes from the hunting-field. You exclude the "one day a week man," who subscribes his £10 or £15, and does little damage to the land over which he rides; but can you exclude the stranger, who is intent upon getting his sport without paying for it? And who are to be the "capping excisemen"? When "capping" was practised fifty years ago, the duty of collecting the "cap" devolved upon the Hunt servants and the Hunt secretary, and was invariably performed at the meet, before hounds moved off to draw the first covert. In those days a liberal latitude was given at the meet for coffee-housing, and it was easy to distinguish the stranger. Now we do not speak of meets, but call them "hunting fixtures," and we can generally judge by the fixture the coverts that will be drawn. Thus, the peripatetic fox-poacher will be first seen at covert-side, where the Hunt servants have to devote their attention to hounds and can afford no time for discovering non-subscribing delinquents. Who, then, are to discover these delinquents? Are the members of the Hunt Committee to ride up to

strangers, soliciting donations with collecting-boxes swung round their necks, like the cadgers in a procession of the unemployed? Are they to ride about with a receipt-book and pen and ink, like the gentlemen who collect the King's taxes?

These questions may appear preposterous even to the verge of absurdity; but my argument is that the "capping" system would prove to be in these days a veritable *reductio ad absurdum*. How is the stranger to know who is authorised to receive his donation? An objector to the "capping" system has suggested to me that its revival would open a field for fraudulent collectors. Now, while I absolutely refuse to associate fraud with the hunting-field, I can foresee that the revival of the "capping" system would give rise to many practical jokes. Moreover, I do not believe that any gentlemen would care to undertake the duties of "capping excisemen," or, in vulgar parlance, of debt collectors. We must recollect that the man who rides across country without subscribing to hounds or without benefiting the occupiers of the land over which he rides, who behaves like a supercilious snob towards the farmers, and conceals an unsportsmanlike heart beneath the pink garb provided by a confiding tailor, is not likely to treat with respect the "capping exciseman," even though the latter may be a peer of the realm.

But what will be the financial result of the "capping" system? When a gentleman accepts the Mastership of Hounds, he expects a guarantee, or, at all events, some statement in regard to the subscription

list. Where "capping" is not practised, the Hunt Secretary has no difficulty in providing this statement. There are the subscription list and the accounts, so that the new Master can judge within a few pounds what his expenditure will be. But when you introduce the "cap," you are introducing an unknown quantity into the monetary calculations of a hunting establishment. One can only guess at the amount which the "cap" will bring in, though it is easy to tell within a five-pound note how many subscriptions have been lost by the "capping" system, for, if this system is revived, the value of the subscription list must diminish. Besides, what is the legal aspect of the "capping" system? Is the payment of the "cap" a defence against an action for trespass? Or is there to be a tariff war between the tenant-farmers and the non-resident hunting-men? Hitherto the hunting-field has been regarded as a club. Apparently the promoters of the "capping" system wish to turn it into a commercial hotel.

It is not a pleasant task for the man, who subscribes towards the expenses of his sport as much as he can afford, and denies himself many luxuries and comforts in order that he may enjoy his sport, to discuss sordid details connected with finance. The truth is, that hunting-men should regulate their subscriptions according to their incomes. I once heard a man praised because in a provincial country he subscribed fifty guineas to hounds. The man is one of the richest commoners in England, and his annual expenditure cannot be less than fifty thousand pounds.

He rents a grouse moor in the Highlands ; his London house and his ordinary country residence are conducted on what the female novelist would term a princely scale. Yet he is held up as a paragon of generosity because he subscribes fifty guineas to the local pack of hounds, while the poor man, who can only afford to give his ten or fifteen guineas, is regarded as mean. It may be argued that few men care to publish the amount of their incomes, and that therefore a sliding scale for hunting subscriptions would be impracticable ; but we can form an estimate of the rate at which our neighbours live, and their actual incomes are, or are supposed to be, divulged to the Income-tax Commissioners.

Before I quit the subject of finance—I confess it is a subject which I dislike, though, like many other unpleasant subjects in this life, I have to discuss it—I wish to ask the hunting millionaires, if they have ever considered the expenses of a Master of Hounds. The end of the 1902–1903 season witnessed many resignations of Mastership in spite of the fact that at the beginning of the season there were thirty-seven changes of Mastership in English fox-hunting establishments. Now, no Master of Hounds cares to plead poverty, so that when he finds that his expenses have been greater than he anticipated, he announces his resignation of Mastership and the Hunt Committee have to scour the country for a new Master. During the last ten years we have been accustomed to see in the advertisement columns of the *Field* this notice : "Wanted. A Master of Hounds." Why not add,

"Must be prepared to spend three thousand pounds per annum on the Hunt?" At all events, the candidate for M.F.H. honours would know what he was expected to pay for the honour. There are certain followers of hounds who wish that the provincial Hunt, to which they subscribe, should be conducted on the same lines as a fashionable Hunt in the Shires. I have always regarded these men as "jackdaws dressed in peacocks' feathers." If they are dissatisfied with the modest methods by which their local Hunt is conducted, why do they not emigrate into a fashionable country?

"I was staying in Leicestershire last week. By Jove! They do the thing in style there!" I once heard an impertinent novice say to an old member of a provincial Hunt. "Then why the devil didn't you stay there?" was the retort. I was interested to know what were the opinions of this novice in regard to style, but I could only gather that his chief impression was that the field resembled a battalion of pink coats. Apparently he had not noticed the hounds or the horses on which the Hunt servants were mounted, though he had at his fingers'-ends a catalogue of men and ladies who were out, with handles to their names, which he had probably learnt by heart from a report in the local paper. I have no doubt that this young man still boasts of his Leicestershire experiences in the smoking-room of the local club; but, before he boasts, he should discover if a Leicestershire man happens to be in the room. I well remember lunching at a certain county club as a guest, the only other

guest being one of the best known first-flight men in Leicestershire. Subsequently in the smoking-room our host introduced us to the local Nimrod, who gave us a sermon about Hunting in the Shires. My fellow guest sat as quiet as if he had been listening to a discourse from the Archbishop of Canterbury until the sermon was finished. Then the cross-examination commenced.

"So you met Captain ——! What did you think of him?"

"Good fellow sociably; but his riding abilities have been terribly exaggerated."

"I agree with you that his horsemanship has been over-estimated. Nor is he a sociable man. I am afraid that you did not catch my name when we were introduced. I *am* Captain ——; but I do not recollect ever having seen you before to-day."

Collapse of the local Nimrod.

I do not wish to be severe in regard to the young provincial Nimrods, but they must not expect too much for their money. Besides, the expectation is unfair towards Masters of Hounds and is prejudicial against the best interests of sport. The Committee of a provincial Hunt secures, as Master, a young man with plenty of money, and the members of the Committee congratulate each other upon their acumen. After two or three seasons the wealthy M.F.H. resigns, in order to become Master of a more fashionable pack. He has been spending his money so that he may gain a first-class degree for M.F.H. honours in one of the hunting countries which have achieved historical fame. In other words, he has been buying his experience;

and, when he has paid the bill, he is a free agent. Then, like Dido, the Hunt Committee exclaims :

> *" Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum,*
> *Posse nefas, tacitusque mea decedere terra ?"*

Let me now draw attention for a few moments to the customs of shooting-tenants and of syndicates of shooting-tenants. Owing to the depressed state of agriculture, many of our large landowners have accepted the big rents offered to them for their shootings by the prosperous money-mongers of London and the large towns. The chief object of these tenants is to obtain a big head of game without any regard to the hunting proclivities of the neighbourhood. They may profess to do all in their power to promote the welfare of local hunting ; but, even if the professions were made in good faith, the power to carry them into effect is infinitesimal, since they are not on the spot to control the practices, or rather the malpractices, of their keepers. Even vulpicide is not regarded now with the same horror as it was a decade ago, though in the majority of hunting countries few keepers would venture openly to shoot a fox. But there is a more deadly, more cruel, and more secret form of destruction than the gun, namely, " stopping-in " the earths during the daytime in such a manner that the strongest dog-fox could not possibly dig himself out, and so must rot to death with all the tortures of slow starvation. Comment upon such inhumanity is unnecessary. I have been told that the inhumanity and extent of the practice have been exaggerated ; yet as far back as February

1898 I exposed the practice in the pages of *Baily's Magazine*, and the accusation has never been refuted.

There is an old distich which says:

> "One fox on foot more diversion will bring
> Than twice twenty thousand cock-pheasants on wing."

Now I have no intention to argue that shooting should be arbitrarily sacrificed in the interests of fox-hunting, because certain non-resident shooting-tenants and their keepers violate the orthodoxy which is common to every sport. The argument would be absurd, since for generations genuine shooting-men and genuine hunting-men have adjusted their differences amicably, and the one sport may be regarded as equally a part of the full enjoyment of country life as the other. Indeed, it has always been my contention that the interests of fox-hunting and shooting are in most respects identical. I am not referring to what I may term the technical interests, but to those interests which are common to all country sports in these days, when faddists and self-styled humanitarians preach that rural England is an England of the past.

In regard to the relations between gamekeepers and shooting-tenants I have received the following communication from Mr. Reginald Herbert, the Master of the Monmouthshire Hounds. "'Like Master, like man.' Gamekeepers, as a rule, carry out what they know or guess to be the vices or wishes of their employer. If the employer insists on foxes as well as pheasants, he will get them. Personally, I prefer drawing well-preserved coverts owned by a staunch

fox-preserver, where the keeper takes a lively interest in the proceedings. He keeps an eye on the foxes and sees that no one interferes with them. In a non-preserved district old foxes or a litter of cubs may disappear in a mysterious manner, and there is no one to appeal to: no one is responsible. I like game-keepers as a body, and try to make friends with them. A resident shooting-tenant can generally be made to see things in the right light. The one to be denied is he who, living miles away, arrives with his party of brother-cockneys on the morning of the shoot with a 'pleasure,' or what is more appropriately called a 'cruelty' van, loaded with hampers full of luncheon, and departs with his friends, often a syndicate taking the shooting together, as soon as the sport is over. You may take it that the death of a fox by unfair means would cause these gentry nothing but the liveliest satisfaction: so it is pretty certain that, if any of the party get a chance of taking a pot-shot at one on the quiet, the opportunity is not lost."

It must be remembered that the non-resident shooting-tenant cares nothing about social ostracism in the neighbourhood where he shoots. He belongs to the tribe of the Pachydermata. According to Mr. Herbert, "the only possible way of shifting such a selfish crew is by getting at the real owner of the shooting, and persuading him, by financial or other arguments, to give them notice to quit." But how are you to get at the covert-owners, the real owners of the shooting? I am presuming, of course, that the real owners have let the shooting because they required money, which, in

the majority of cases, they do not spend in their native country. If the real owner continued to reside in the country after letting his shooting, then Mr. Herbert's theory could be carried into practice: but suppose that the owner is spending the rents at Monte Carlo or anywhere else abroad! Moreover, the farmers complain that they reap no benefit from the shooting-tenants and not even the courtesy which, in the case of landowners, assumes the practical shape of a present of game and often an invitation for a day's sport.

I can, however, suggest one way by which Mr. Herbert's scheme of getting at the real owner might be executed. Why should there not be a combination of the landowners in any particular country in which shooting-tenancies are prevalent, in order that they might agree amongst themselves to insert a clause in the leases of all shooting-tenancies, under which the tenant should be liable to a fine whenever his coverts failed to hold a fox, provided that hounds did not visit them more than a specified number of times at specified intervals during the season? There are, however, two objections to my suggestion. The one is, that coverts, which are considered sure finds, are sometimes drawn blank through no fault of either the owner or tenant. The other is, that it would be easy to turn down a bagged fox on the morning of the fixture.

That the gamekeepers have their complaints against hunting-men I do not deny. I have, within only a week of writing these lines, received a complaint to the effect that hunting-men cannot, or will not, find some

effective means of protecting game-nests against foxes. But surely it is the duty of the gamekeeper to discover these effective means, of which there are plenty! Under the headline of "Gamekeepers and Fox-hunting," I made some stringent remarks in the columns of *Country Sport* on November 8, 1902. On November 29 there appeared a reply, presumably written by a gamekeeper. I publish this reply *in extenso*, in spite of the fact that the writer does not apparently hold that high opinion of me which I hold of myself:

GAMEKEEPERS AND FOX-HUNTING.

"SIR,—Under the above heading, your correspondent, 'G. F. U.,' in your issue of the 8th inst., makes an attack upon gamekeepers, which seems to have been his sole object in writing the somewhat scurrilous article. Although I do not, and I daresay there are not many sportsmen either who pay much attention to such 'slang' articles as this appearing in a sporting journal, I do not think they should always pass without a word from the party attacked, and that is my plea for troubling you with these few lines.

"Because there are some valuable sporting papers, such as yours, at all times open to those who may care to give their opinions on subjects which may be of interest to the sporting fraternity, it is no reason why that privilege should be abused for the sake of attacking any class against whom we may have a grudge.

"Fox-hunting and game-preserving are, to my way of

thinking, the two sports of these islands (unless we have to reckon with angling). While there are hundreds—I may say thousands—of men who shoot and never hunt, there are very few who hunt and never shoot. One might think by this we would have more complaints from shooting-men than from huntsmen, but such is not the case. Huntsmen seem to think that, after the preserver has spent thousands of pounds in making game coverts, and hundreds annually preserving game, these coverts are to be kept for the sole enjoyment of the M.F.H. and his followers. The preserver is not to authorise that horrible creature, the gamekeeper, to look after foxes as well as winged game (my opinion is, when in a hunting country, foxes might be considered game). According to 'G. F. U.,' the gamekeeper should see to nothing; his coverts and game are to be left at the mercy of the earth-stopper, who, 'if foxes are about, should see the coverts are not drawn blank.' So much for your correspondent's knowledge of foxes. Oh! those wily creatures, how they can baffle some of our present-day authorities!

"Perhaps the few darts thrown at the shooting-tenant were made for the purpose of putting them on their guard of their dishonest servants; but the majority of these gentlemen are men of clear understanding, sportsmen to boot, and hold a higher opinion of their fellow man than the pot-hunter or cockney, and require no dictation from onlookers. Should they require advice they seek it from their keepers, and who should know more about the preserve on which

he is employed, granted he is a man of ordinary intelligence. I am not saying there are no black sheep among gamekeepers, but of course your correspondent speaks of them as a class. However, he is not the only one who has spent much of his precious time writing on the same subject. Still, gamekeepers get along somehow, and, in fact, are coming along by leaps and bounds, in spite of the attacks made on them by a certain mob who infest the sporting press.

"I would refer your readers to what Mr. Teasdale Buckell, writing in *Vanity Fair*, says on the attitude of game-preservers and fox-hunters towards each other (or they may find all that may interest them in the *Shooting Times* of 1st inst.). But before I proceed further, I must part with your correspondent 'G. F. U.' After considerable waste of 'slang' he winds up by saying: 'It must be clearly understood that fox-hunters ought not to rely on the goodwill of game-keepers for their foxes.' Well, I may tell 'G. F. U.' as long as huntsmen hunt they will have to rely on gamekeepers for their foxes; and, as a matter of fact, all sportsmen are satisfied to rely on them. Seldom do we hear complaints from the M.F.H. As for the earth-stopper, he must go before game-preserving, and if a gamekeeper is responsible for the foxes, I fail to see why there should be such an individual as an earth-stopper. In conclusion, I may add I for one would not nor would I advocate the wholesale killing of foxes because my employer was not a hunting-man, or in any way interested in it. I am penning these lines in the centre of 'Ould' Ireland, where a crusade is

going on at the present time against hunting. I am employed on an estate where neither my employer or any member of the family hunt. Game is reared every year, and on this estate there were this year, and are still, I believe, about fifteen foxes in one wood of some two hundred acres. During my stay here (two years) I never had, nor have I ever known of any keeper on the place, to kill a fox in that time. Still, we get, I dare say, the name of killing foxes, simply because we do not hunt. To finish, hunting-men owe a great deal more to game-preservers than they seem to be aware of. I would think there is very little cause for the complaints we hear from hunting-men, though they may only come from one-horse gentlemen.

"Yours truly,

"R. MOLLISON.

"Charleville Forest, Tullamore,
"King's County,
"*November* 25, 1902."

I will say nothing about the personal attacks upon myself, but have preferred to quote the letter as an average exposition of the gamekeeper's views.

In reference to ladies in the hunting-field, I wish to make only a very few brief remarks. In the first place, I believe that the more ladies who hunt the better it is for the sport, providing the ladies are both sportswomen and horsewomen and are mounted on safe conveyances across country. The last proviso is essential. A lady struggling to get a Park hack or a fat cob through a gap, hat half off and hair down her back, with the family coachman plying his hunting-crop

vigorously in the rear, vainly urging the unwilling steed to a supreme effort, is a picture which we laugh at when delineated by Mr. Finch Mason; but in the hunting-field our feelings are mingled with disgust and pity—pity for the lady in distress, and disgust for the mean fool who mounted her on a bathing-machine horse. I have before me a little book written by Lady Violet Greville, entitled "Ladies in the Field." I cannot agree with all her opinions. Thus she tells us that "no lady should hunt till she can ride, by which I mean, till she can manage all sorts of horses, easy and difficult to ride, till she knows how to gallop, how to jump, and is capable of looking after herself." I know ladies who can fulfil these acquirements, but they were taught to ride as little girls in the hunting-field by their fathers or elder brothers. We have heard the story of the maiden aunt who forbade her nephew to go into the water until he could swim, but I was surprised that Lady Violet should have applied the story to the hunting-field.

Outside London and the large towns, so far as I am aware, there is not a single riding-school where ladies can be taught to jump. There are dealers who possess paddocks in which they have erected every description of made fence. Some of these paddocks might almost be described as miniature steeplechase-courses, and the dealers are willing to give lessons if they scent a future customer. But where the lady has a male relation who can ride, and is capable of imparting instruction, he should be the riding-master. Jogging along country lanes, or cantering in the Row, will not make a lady a

good horsewoman from a hunting standard. As for the riding masters and mistresses who prefer to teach school-girls, my experience is that they invariably require teaching themselves. This may appear severe criticism, but I believe it to be the truth, and I base my belief upon personal observation. Now, the very first lesson that a young girl should be taught is to sit square in the saddle, so that her eyes look straight through her horse's ears: the second lesson is to keep the elbows close to the side. If these rudiments of the art of horsewomanship are neglected in the first place, it is seldom that the girl will learn them in later life. It must also be remembered that, unless a lady sits square in her saddle, she will probably give her horse a sore back. I need hardly add that, for a lady to become a good woman to hounds, it is essential that her nervous system should have been educated during girlhood.

The most notable example of this postulate was the late Empress of Austria, for while only a child she was encouraged at her Bavarian home in her fondness for riding, with the result that, when she was past forty, her nerve was as strong as that of any woman who ever rode in an English hunting-field. I admit that she had the best and safest hunters that money could buy; that her three successive pilots, namely, Captain "Bay" Middleton, Mr. Trotter, and Colonel Charles Rivers Bulkeley, were three of the finest horsemen in England; and that it was considered to be a breach of etiquette for anybody to ride in front of her, either at her fences or on the flat. But, great as these advan-

tages undoubtedly are, they would be valueless unless the possessor of them had a strong nerve, fine hands and a firm seat.

As was only to be expected, these visits of the Kaiserin to English hunting-fields, the first of which took place in the 1877–78 season, when she rented Cottesbrooke Park, did much to increase the popularity of fox-hunting amongst ladies. But the popularity was not an unmixed blessing. Many of the new recruits were not popular with Masters of Hounds. They lacked "the calm repose of Vere de Vere." Other ladies hunted who could not afford to hunt, and so were obliged to ride cheap horses. Now, a lady should have as safe a conveyance across country as it is possible to procure. Her horse should have been so thoroughly schooled over every description of fence that it should be almost an impossibility for him to put a foot wrong, and his temper should be perfect. The habit of mounting ladies on thoroughbreds which have been weeded out of racing-stables is dangerous to a degree bordering on crime. I have even seen a young girl riding a broken-down polo pony! I do not wish to be ungallant, but I must lodge a protest against the manners of certain lady-cyclists, who apparently wish to assert their independence of fox-hunting etiquette by attempting to follow hounds on their machines. I have seen ladies trying to thread their way down a narrow lane through a cavalcade of excited horses, at the risk of being kicked to death. These ladies do not understand the risk which they are encountering, or, to judge by their conduct, place

very little value upon their own lives. However, perhaps the givers of the cycles have insured the lives of the ladies. At the beginning of 1902 I was asked to suggest to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts that the War Office should encourage cross-country riding in the Army through the medium of the hunting-field. I complied with the request, and on February 11 received a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel H. Streatfeild, private secretary to Lord Roberts, thanking me for my suggestions and informing me that the Commander-in-Chief was considering them. My suggestions were not original, but were founded upon news which I had received from Germany and Russia relating to the methods by which German and Russian soldiers are taught to ride, not in the riding-schools but in the hunting-field. The German methods of teaching military horsemanship have been, or should have been, known to us for many years. Thus, the Parforce Jagd, or Royal Prussian Boarhounds, of which pack Count Hoheman is the Master, is mainly supported by officers, inasmuch as it enables the young officers in the German Army to get rid of that stiffness of seat, which results from exercise in the stilted style of the military riding-schools. Moreover, the officers are given facilities and special leave, so that they may ride in the races open to gentlemen riders. But these German methods of training young officers in the science of cross-country riding for military purposes have been no secret since the accession of the present Kaiser to the Imperial Throne. The Russian methods, however, came as a surprise.

In August 1900 the Nikolaievsky Hunting College, named after the Grand Duke Nikolas Nikolaievich, Inspector-General of Cavalry in the province of Wilna, erected on the estates of Count Pozezdziecki (English, Postawy), sixty versts from Swiencany, was officially consecrated. The date is interesting, because it was then that the Boer horsemanship had become to be recognised as an important factor in guerilla warfare. The Wilna Hunting College was erected in *three months.* Russian diplomacy may be dilatory according to the wishes of the Russian diplomatists, but Duke Nikolas was not the man to put up with red tape. The construction of the college can be described in a very few words. It is a handsome three-storey building, containing one hundred rooms for officers, with dining-rooms and the usual officers' recreation-rooms. Adjoining are stables for three hundred horses, barrack accommodation, and kennels, in which there were in 1902 seventy-five couples of hounds, exclusive of harriers and greyhounds. There is also a reserve or breeding-ground for deer, which were originally brought from the Imperial preserves at Gachina. The system of conducting the sport, or the lessons in horsemanship, is as follows: There are both drag-hunts and stag-hunts. For the former the distance is never under fifteen versts, or nine and three-quarter miles, over broken country with wide ditches and high fences; and the distance is generally covered in about thirty-five minutes. The average distance for a stag-hunt is from ten to twelve miles. Also, in connection with the Hunting College, there is a Racing Society.

The races take place over unknown land, strewn with obstacles, the distances being from four to seven versts, *i.e.*, from two miles six furlongs to four miles four furlongs. The troopers take part in these races with the officers, and the chargers jump almost as well as the thoroughbreds.

Owing to the circumscribed area of English hunting-fields, it would be impossible for us to follow the example of Russia, so far as a Hunting College is concerned. Besides, with us hunting is essentially a cosmopolitan sport, in spite of the efforts of certain misguided individuals to make it the sport of the wealthy few. Nor would the landowners and tenant-farmers allow the War Office to make use of the land without liberal compensation. But the rule is for each squadron to have one officer and eight men trained as scouts and to occupy ground from point to point across country. Now, to use the words which Colonel Bower, of Droxford, used in 1860, "when the number of hunting-men in Great Britain is considered, all of whom would be ready to turn out to harass the flank of an invader, beyond reach even of his cavalry, some estimation may be formed of the value of this contribution to the plan of defence." Forty years later the enrolment of the Imperial Yeomanry, owing to the exertions of Lord Chesham, proved beyond all doubt that the hunting-field can supply men and horses for the defence of the country, while the zeal of first-flight men to fight for the Empire largely increased the popularity of hunting. People who had hitherto regarded hunting as an extravagant pastime only to be indulged in by

the wealthy few, recognised the hunting-field as a training school for light cavalry. Directly the call to arms was sounded in the hunting-field there was a response which was the wonder of all foreign nations. Indeed, the number of volunteers was so great that the difficulty was the task of selection. Yet the efforts of Lord Chesham were at first regarded by the War Office with supercilious apathy. However, it is not within my province to censure the War Office, though it is only fair to point out the extent to which in our late war the hunting-field formed one of the bulwarks of the Army.

CHAPTER II

THE DISGUISED FRIENDS AND ENEMIES OF HUNTING

Personality of the Master—Hunting scandal—Alfred Earp's account of Tom Firr—Interference in the field—Grievances of small farmers—Their ancient rights—Lord Ribblesdale on the wire trouble—Whyte-Melville on the same—Wire in New South Wales

IT often happens that the people whom we consider to be our best friends are our worst enemies, and that the people whom we had always regarded as our worst enemies were in reality our best friends. Especially is this the case in the hunting world. A Master of Hounds, unless he possesses superhuman intelligence, cannot distinguish between his staunch supporters and "the snakes in the grass," who pretend to be friendly towards hunting. I have been told that in many instances this secret hostility to hunting has been caused by the indiscreet conduct of the Master of Hounds, who has failed to recognise the important social position of the large covert-owners. Admitting my information to be true, surely the secret hostility would be against the Master of Hounds and not against the sport! I cannot imagine that any one of the large covert-owners who have preserved foxes for us, and

From a photograph by Whitlock Bros., Wolverhampton

MR. J. C. MUNRO

MASTER OF THE ATHERSTONE HOUNDS

PLATE II

whose fathers and grandfathers have preserved foxes for us, would renounce his love of hunting for the sake of some personal dislike. He may use his influence in order to force the Master to resign. In the heat of the moment he may even threaten that he would not allow hounds to draw his coverts, though his listeners know that he would never carry his threat into execution. It sometimes happens, however, that one of his listeners is "a snake in the grass," and the threat is noised abroad. "They say that the Squire won't allow hounds to draw his coverts." The report spreads from the county club to the village alehouse, and is magnified by the literary opponents of hunting in the local press into the bald statement that the Squire is adverse to the sport. In such an instance the disguised enemy of hunting is the gossiping Paul Pry, who first circulated the report.

On one occasion I was the witness of the start of an unpleasant occurrence of this character. There had been a difference of opinion between the Master and a covert-owner in the hunting-field, and strong language had been used on both sides. It is unnecessary to relate the merits or demerits of the dispute, which was amicably settled within a week, so far as the principal parties were concerned. But, unfortunately, before the settlement of the dispute, the covert-owner had said at a dinner-party at his own house that he would not allow the Master to draw his coverts until he had apologised. This statement was made before a private circle of supposed friends over the mahogany after dinner; yet within a few days it was the public property of the

countryside, with the important omission of the clause as to the apology. It was never discovered for an absolute certainty who was "the snake in the grass" on this occasion, though most of the guests formed a shrewd opinion as to the identity of the reptile.

The people who retail hunting scandal must be reckoned amongst the most dangerous disguised enemies of the sport. I believe that in many cases they do not intend to create mischief, but I could relate many instances where *malice prépense* was plainly the motive of the scandal. I am sorry to say that often ladies are the culprits, though I am glad to record that I have heard ladies put down this scandal-mongering with a strong voice when it was impossible for a man to utter the rebuke. Of course we must expect to find what Punch calls "feline amenities" in the hunting-field; but when these feline amenities affect the prestige of the Hunt they must be restrained by a strong hand, if only for the reason that they destroy the social charm of hunting. But I do not wish to be accused of want of chivalry. When all has been said, the tittle-tattle of ladies is seldom taken seriously by sensible people. Let us now consider the needless friction caused by men who have hunted regularly for many seasons and who therefore ought to know better.

These men have been called the "enemies within the gates." They call themselves sportsmen and supporters of fox-hunting. They dress the part as well as London tailors can dress them: they subscribe liberally to the Hunt funds, and keep open house whenever it is probable that hounds will be in their neigh-

bourhood; they talk hunting in and out of season, and always wear a pink dress-coat when they go out to dinner. Briefly, they possess all the outward and visible signs of genuine fox-hunting sportsmen; but they regard hunting only as a spectacle and take little or no thought for the sport as a sport. I admit that some of them are hard riders and good horsemen, but it is this contingent which causes the Master and the Huntsman the most anxiety. To the battalion of thrusting scoundrels may be attributed the short scrambles which are not worthy of being called hunting runs, and the difficulty of hunting a fox as he should be hunted on a cold-scenting day. Now, the first-flight men, who hunt merely in order to ride, can easily ruin a day's sport unless, consciously or unconsciously, they are brought under the discipline of the Master or of the Huntsman. Alfred Earp, who whipped-in to Tom Firr for twenty-four seasons, thus describes the tactics of the famous huntsman. "I have often seen him on a bad scenting day, when casting his hounds, and some of the field, as they often do, kept moving on. He would work his horse broadside on in front of them, and hold them there, all so quietly that they would not realise his move." Parenthetically, in justice to living huntsmen, it is fair to state that for the last fifteen years of his hunting career, if not during the twenty-seven seasons when he was Huntsman to the Quorn, and the three previous seasons, when he carried the horn for the North Warwickshire under Mr. Lant, Tom Firr had the reputation of being the most scientific huntsman in England. He would

have been a bold first-flight man who dared to interfere with him in the discharge of his duties. Indeed, I only know of one case in which he was interfered with. This happened on December 22, 1884, when the Quorn and Belvoir packs clashed in Widmerpool Plantation in the Quorn country, the Belvoir having hunted their fox from Harby Covert.

"Tally-ho! There goes my fox!" Tom Firr shouted.

"Now, Tom, behave yourself!" responded Frank Gillard, the Huntsman of the Belvoir; "I shall be very angry with you directly, Tom, if you don't let *my* fox alone."

There was no further argument, for the two packs opened on the line and killed him, after hunting together for one hour and five minutes in Lord Wilton's plantation, close to Saxelby Spinney, the Belvoir having run consecutively for two hours and twenty-four minutes. The brush of this stout fox was presented to the Duke of Rutland and the mask was secured by Tom Firr.

Interference in the field with the Master, the Huntsman, and the Hunt servants has probably caused more loss of sport than any other breach of hunting etiquette. Undoubtedly there are occasions when individual members of the Hunt can render important assistance to the Huntsman, but it may be laid down as a broad rule that it is wise to do nothing. The individual member, especially if his knowledge of hunting is limited, is more apt to have made a mistake than to have rendered valuable assistance, in which case

he is sure to bring down the wrath of the Master on his devoted head. I have known many instances in which ignorant interference has caused hounds to change foxes when they were almost on the brush of the hunted fox. Now, the probability is that the fresh fox will beat hounds, so that the hounds are thus deprived of the blood to which they are fairly entitled. Of course it is a sore temptation to a novice to shout "Tally-ho!" when he happens to view a fox, but it would be wiser for him to restrain his voice until he has ascertained whether the fox which he has viewed is the hunted fox or a fresh one. "Do you not meddle."

There is another class of men who do not interfere with the real business of the day in the hunting-field, but who indirectly do much harm to hunting. For want of a better term, I will call them the "curmudgeons" of the hunting-field. Now "curmudgeon" in old English was spelt "cornmudgin," and meant a corn merchant, who kept up the price of corn by his avarice. The modern hunting curmudgeon professes to be the friend of the farmers, and would like to be the *amicus curiæ* in all disputes which may arise in even the best-regulated Hunts between the tenant-farmers and the hunting-men. As a matter of fact, he is merely a professional agitator, though, beyond satisfying an innate love of mischief, I have never been able to understand what substantial gain he earns from his profession. He subscribes to hounds and potters about after hounds. Thus, ostensibly, he is a friend of the sport. The small farmers regard him with unmixed

admiration. Who could be more genial than the curmudgeon? The wife of the small farmer has lost two or three chickens, but the curmudgeon makes the loss amount to twelve or thirteen when he writes the following type of letter to the Hunt Secretary:

"DEAR A——,—You will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Wheatsheaf lost a dozen or thirteen fowls on Tuesday night last, which she had been fattening for market. Wheatsheaf, like the staunch supporter of hunting that you know him to be, swears that he will make no claim. But, as I know, the poor chap cannot afford to lose his poultry. Therefore, I am sure that you will thank me for bringing his loss before your notice. (Here follows palaver for three pages.) Don't forget to give me a call whenever you are passing.—Yours, &c.,

"PAUL PRY CURMUDGEON."

It will thus be seen that the curmudgeon has committed two acts of mischief: he has robbed the Hunt funds, and he has caused farmer Wheatsheaf to think that he can always get the most extravagant compensation for the most trivial damage. Now, I do not suggest for a moment that the curmudgeon exaggerated the number of fowls killed with any dishonest intention. Probably he did not know the exact number, but had only heard that a fox had visited Mrs. Wheatsheaf's poultry-yard. That would be sufficient for him. It is his wish, and he generally succeeds in attaining this wish, to pose as the farmers' friend. He likes to be king of his own

From a photograph by Bennett & Clark, Wolverhampton

MR. SAM LOVERIDGE

HON. SEC. ALBRIGHTON HOUNDS

PLATE III

company. Watch him at a local hunt race meeting, or any other meeting where farmers congregate. He will be surrounded by parasites, who have but small claims to be called hunting farmers, except that they occupy land which hounds occasionally cross; but they serve to enhance his importance. The Master of Hounds knows that these small farmers can do as much (if not more) either to promote or to ruin sport as the men who farm some hundreds of acres; therefore, it is imperative for him not to offend the curmudgeon, even if he be convinced in his own mind that the latter is a fraudulent friend of fox-hunting.

I have known many cases in which it was advisable that there should be an intervener between the small farmer and the Master of Hounds, or the Hunt Committee. My experience is that, unless the landlord takes an interest in the matter, the intervener should be a large farmer. But in these days of absentee landlords, it is wiser to go to the "man on the spot." Where the Hunt Secretary is, or has been, a farmer, as is the case with the Albrighton Hunt, there can be no doubt but that he is the proper man to smooth away these little worries of the hunting-field. Of course, different Hunt secretaries have very different ideas of their duties, and Masters of Hounds disagree in regard to these duties. Thus, in some Hunts the Secretary may be described as an accountant's clerk, while in other Hunts his position and authority are almost equal to those of a Joint Master. In the latter circumstances it may happen that the Master becomes jealous of the influence of his Secretary; but I am glad to

think that such cases are few and far between. At all events, within my own experience, I have known only two instances of this jealousy, and in neither instance was there any reasonable cause for it. However, I must revert to the petty grievances of the small farmer, and dismiss them, before considering the actions of certain disguised enemies of hunting, who hold influential positions in hunting countries.

Perhaps the most common grievance of the small farmer is that he has been snubbed by a member of the swell snob brigade. He very naturally concludes that the snob must be an important person, because he wears a pink coat and, apparently, knows the leading members of the Hunt. The truth is that the swell snob has a nodding acquaintanceship with the leading members of the Hunt, which is strictly confined to the hunting-field, but which possesses no social significance whatsoever. Still, the small farmer can hardly be expected to know that the man, who has treated him with insolent contempt, would receive the cut direct in Pall Mall, if he claimed acquaintance with the Master or any other leading member of the Hunt. I have often tried to discover whence these snobs come. The idea that they are commercial men from our large manufacturing towns I have proved to my own satisfaction to be false. At all events, I have been told that it is false by Master of Hounds, by huntsmen, and by tenant farmers. Besides, men who are engaged in business know the value of *la politesse*, far too well to offend people unnecessarily. My own belief is that they are the sons, and I am sorry to add the daughters, of

men who have made their piles, as the Americans say, and allow their children to lead idle loafing lives. I admit that the children are the victims of parental indulgence, and might have been decent members of society, if they had not been educated in the belief that everybody must bow down before their wealth. We have, however, to consider by what methods their supercilious conduct towards the farmers should be corrected. Sycophancy in the world of sport has always been regarded as the most rotten ladder upon which a man or woman can hope to climb into the inner regions of county society. The sycophant, who toadies his or her social superiors, and expects sycophancy from the farmers in the hunting-field, is regarded with contempt and tolerated for the sake of his or her signature on the back of a bill.

Strong language! the reader may say; but violent diseases require strong remedies. Masters of Hounds must consider how they can curb the supercilious insolence of the swell snobs towards the farmers. In another chapter of this volume, I have related the opinions of a famous ex-huntsman in regard to the duties of a Master of Hounds in the hunting-field. In this chapter I do not wish to criticise these duties in detail; but I am convinced that if the Master made it his business to see that the swell snob did not insult the farmer, the latter would never trouble the hunting world with his grievances.

There is a further point, which I would wish to impress upon the minds of Masters of Hounds, who undertake the Mastership of a country to which they

are strange. Many of the farmers, both yeoman farmers and tenant farmers, consider their farms as their natural and legal inheritance. For many generations their forefathers have farmed the same land. They may be ultra-Conservative, or Tory, in their ideas. They may object to the modern agricultural machinery, which has driven the rural population of England into the slums of manufacturing towns. They may be foolish, because they cling to the traditions of their ancestors. But we have the indisputable fact that they regard fox-hunting as their ancestral sport. In Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire, there are farmers now whose ancestors have occupied the land for more than three hundred years, the occupancy descending from generation to generation. Should this statement be disputed by any of my readers, I could give the names, in confidence, of the farmers to whom I have alluded. I may say that the pedigree of one farmer dates back to the Saxon Heptarchy, and I had to trace it in the Black Letter records at the British Museum.

But is it the duty of the Master of Hounds to adjudicate between the yeoman or tenant farmer and the swell snob? I maintain that it is the duty of the Master of Hounds to keep his field in order, and to see that the farmers, upon whom he and his followers depend for their sport, are not insulted. We have fifty-two Masters of Foxhounds in England, who act as their own huntsmen, out of one hundred and sixty-four recognised packs. I do not wish to express any opinion, from the sporting point of view, about this

fashion of Masters acting as their own huntsmen, which has become so prevalent during the last decade; but, judged from the social point of view, I am convinced that the fashion has been detrimental to fox-hunting. If the Master who hunts his own hounds were to appoint a competent field-master, who possessed the influence and ability to keep a modern field in order, we should hear little, if anything at all, about the insolent behaviour of swell snobs in the hunting-field. But when the Master is hunting, or trying to hunt, his own hounds, he cannot possibly have any time in which to superintend the discipline of the field. Nobody is better aware of this fact than the swell snob, whose chief delight is to parade the parental wealth, to the great annoyance of the farmers.

Let me recount here the crux of a conversation, which I had in March 1903, with a good old sportsman whom I have known for over thirty years, though I had not seen him for ten years, till we met accidentally at the Agricultural Hall. After the usual preliminary greetings my first question was: "What sort of sport have you had this season down in your part of the world?" His reply was: "Plenty of foxes, plenty of wire, and plenty of damned cockneys?"

Now, so far as I have been able to ascertain during the last three or four seasons, Masters of Hounds have had no cause to complain of the dearth of foxes; so, for the present, we may dismiss the question of the preservation of foxes, or I should say of the destruction of foxes. In regard to wire, the Editor sends me a letter from Lord Ribblesdale, in which he writes: "I

should say fifty words would very nearly include all that there is to say about it. You must remember wire is not a new portent. Its prevalence is conceded; its inconvenience to hunting-people; its convenience to farmers and foresters; and its permanent factor in hunting affairs, which in most parts of England has to be reckoned with, and which hereabouts, for instance, is dealt with satisfactorily." Lord Ribblesdale writes from Melton Mowbray, where money is like sand on the sea-shore if it is required for promoting the welfare of fox-hunting. But in the provinces money is not so abundant as it is in the fashionable shires, while the men who farm arable land incur more damage from hunting, and *a fortiori* require more compensation than the graziers, who occupy the larger pastures of Leicestershire.

> "And bitter the curses you launch in your ire
> At the villain who fenced his enclosure with wire."

The above two lines are the only words, which I have been able to discover, that the late Major Whyte-Melville ever penned in a vindictive spirit; and the only caustic speech, which I have heard recorded of him, was to a land-owner, who had erected wire. "I'm a Christian man, and so bear no malice; but if any one were to tell me that you had got a wasps' nest inside your breeches I should be very glad to hear it." What more suitable punishment could be devised for the user of barbed wire in a hunting country!

During the Coronation Year I had the pleasure of meeting some large stock-raisers from New South

Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, and had many opportunities of discussing the question of wire-fencing with them. They could not understand why English farmers erected barbed wire. Briefly their argument was—"We do not depend upon the carcases of our beasts; we depend upon their hides!" Now the instinct of any animal, human or otherwise, when pricked is to press against the prick, with the result that the hide is blemished, and is thrown aside by the tanner as soiled goods, and paid for at the same rate as if it were "shoddy." Why cannot the English farmer understand that he possesses a commercial friend in the tanner?

But when large land-owners, holding influential positions in their respective counties, permit barbed wire to be erected upon their estates, we cannot blame the small farmer if he imitates the example of the pseudo-sportsmen, whom he has been taught to believe are the paramount lords of the soil. When, however, these pseudo-sporting land-owners play the *rôle* of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and say to Masters of Hounds, "Ye take too much upon you!"—for the rest of the moral I must refer my readers to the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers.

CHAPTER III

FAMOUS MASTERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Mr. John Corbet—Lord Middleton—Lord Althorp—Mr. George Forester—Parson Stephens—Tom Moody—Mr. John Mytton—Mr. Thomas Assheton-Smith—Mr. George Osbaldeston—Mr. Tom Smith—Sir Watkin Williams Wynn—The Duke of Beaufort

MR. JOHN CORBET

FEW people understand the difficulties of the modern sporting author. I allude to these difficulties because, though I have used every endeavour to make this book a readable work of reference, I am aware that I must have made errors, if not in regard to facts, in regard to opinions; but the following anecdotal memoirs are, to the best of my belief, authentic. There may be many sins of omission in regard to them, but I have taken every precaution in my power to see that there should be no sins of commission. There are many Masters of the nineteenth century whom, perhaps, I ought to have mentioned, some of whom may probably have been more famous than those to whom I intend to allude; but, to do *full* justice to all of them, I should have required a volume or two of the "Dictionary of National Biography."

In the first decade of the century few men were better known or more esteemed in the hunting world than Mr. John Corbet, of Sundorne Castle, in Shropshire. Even now, after the lapse of ninety and three years, he is still regarded as one of the most celebrated Masters of the old school. He succeeded Mr. Warde in the Warwickshire country in 1791, and Warwickshire came to the front rank of hunting countries. During the season he resided at Clopton House, near Stratford-on-Avon; he had kennels both at Stratford and at Meriden, but at the end of the season the hounds were taken back to Sundorne. His reign lasted from 1791 till 1811, his last fixture being on Saturday, February 9, 1811. Then he resigned owing to ill-health, though he lived till May 19, 1817, when he had completed his sixty-fifth year. To quote the words of "Castor," "In him died one who with the strictest moral and religious principles combined the best affections of the heart. As a friend, husband, father, master, landlord, or, in fact, in whatever character he might be called upon to fill, he displayed those genuine qualities which a mere superficial good nature can never supply."

Mr. Corbet had had a long experience of Mastership of Hounds before he undertook to hunt the whole of Warwickshire, during which period the fame of his pack was mainly due to one hound, namely, the celebrated Trojan. I only mention Trojan because the blood of Trojan is probably more famous than that of any other hound. Indeed, in some records which I have come across, the Warwickshire hounds are

alluded to as "The Trojans," and Mr. Corbet was often called "The Father of the Trojans." He hunted the whole of Warwickshire, including the Dunchurch and Atherstone countries, without any subscription, excepting five pounds a year from each of the members for earth-stopping, and, as a rule, his kennels contained seventy couples of hounds. As a rider he would never jump if he could help it, though he would gallop as hard as he could along rough lanes and stony roads. This habit did not spring from lack of nerve, for probably it takes more nerve to gallop down a rough lane than to negotiate a bullfinch. Certainly he had many nasty croppers. On one occasion he jumped a gate because he was unable to stop his horse. "I have done more than I meant to do," he quietly remarked at the finish. His civility in the field was a proverb. If a man were seen in the midst of hounds, he would merely call out, "Pray, sir, hold hard; you will spoil your own sport." When hounds were settled on their fox he would shout, "Now, gentlemen, ride over them; now ride, and catch them if you can."

Very different, however, was his huntsman, Will Barrow. In fact, master and man were "as poles asunder." Will's language was not always fit for publication. But as a rider he had few rivals in the annals of horsemansnip. Mr. Childe, of Kinlet, Shropshire, commonly known as "The Flying Childe," had been his first Master, and had given him his first lessons. Barrow, Mr. Childe said, was the only servant he ever had or knew fit to trust with his own horses' mouths, having so gentle and good a hand on his

bridle. His last days were spent with Mr. Corbet's harriers at Sundorne, where he was killed by a fall from his horse, a fitting end for a celebrated and hard-riding huntsman.

In Mr. Corbet's day Leamington was a mere village. A range of baths erected by a Mr. Matthew Wise alone constituted its pretensions to be called a Spa, and the accommodation provided for visitors, hunting and otherwise, was of the most rural and uncomfortable description. Stratford-on-Avon was therefore chosen as the social centre of the Hunt, and the Hunt Club had its headquarters at the "White Lion" in that town.

Let me quote "Castor's" description of the famous club: "The evening uniform of the club was black stockings, breeches, and waistcoat, and a scarlet coat with handsome gilt buttons, with the letters 'S. H.' upon them, and a black velvet collar. This last appendage gained the members of the club the name of 'Black Collars,' and as such they were referred to in the poem of 'The Epwell Hunt.' It corresponded, in fact, with the white collar badge of the Pytchley Hunt, and seems to have been also a part of the dress in the field, as it figures in a coloured plate of John Corbet and his hounds by Thomas Weaver. The commencement of the season was always ushered in in a marked manner. The members of the club congregated once more at Stratford, and on the first Monday in November Lord Willoughby de Broke entertained the Master and a numerous party to dinner."

So many runs were recorded with Mr. Corbet's hounds, some of them in verse, that I can only allude

to the most important briefly, omitting those which took place previous to the commencement of the century. On December 10, 1801, a memorable run took place from Lord Northampton's seat at Compton Wynites, when a fox, found in the gorse by Epwell White House, ran before hounds for four hours and a quarter, till 5.15 P.M., when they were whipped off on account of the darkness. "Not one horse returned that night to the stable he had left in the morning," says the record. In another run from Wolford a fox eluded hounds after running before them for six hours. Only one man, viz., Jack Barrow, the first whip, finished on the same horse that he started on. This distance is computed at fifty miles.

On Easter Monday, 1803, the finish took place in Lady Hertford's ornamental dairy, when

> "The pack, heedless of the damsel's scream,
> First ate the fox—then drank the cream."

In 1806, starting from Bearley Bushes, hounds accounted for their fox after four hours and fifty minutes. Certainly Mr. Edward Goulburn, in his poem, dated 1807, called "The Epwell Hunt," was justified in writing

> "The blood of old Trojan is all I desire,
> So give me the hounds of the Warwickshire Squire."

If these runs were not recorded by unimpeachable authorities, the modern hunting-man would regard them as exaggerations. That they must have been

slow-hunting runs admits of no doubt; but to us, who have been educated to consider twenty minutes on the grass without a check as a red-letter day, these runs of over four hours seem marvellous. Still, these are the records recorded in the history of the Warwickshire hounds.

I have already alluded to the moral character of Mr. John Corbet. Not only was his private life beyond reproach, but his public life gained him distinction. He succeeded Lord Clive as M.P. for Stratford and took an active part in agricultural politics until ill-health compelled him to desist from taking any active part in the discussion of the leading questions of the day. During his life he was honoured, and after his death he was lamented.

LORD MIDDLETON

I must refer to the sixth Lord Middleton immediately after alluding to Mr. John Corbet, whom he succeeded as Master of the Warwickshire Hunt. Mr. Corbet's last fixture was February 9, 1811, and Lord Middleton's first fixture was at Itchington Heath, on February 11, 1811. The dates are interesting, because Mr. Corbet did not advertise his hounds for sale till the morning of February 9, when Lord Middleton purchased them for 1220 guineas, and hunted them on the 11th. Certainly in those days they had a habit of making the coach run, and did not dream of putting on the brake when it was a question of hunting a country. It was a difficult task to succeed Mr. Corbet, but personal popularity and hearty support enabled Lord Middleton to achieve it. In the first place, he was known to be a staunch friend to the farmers, and commenced his reign by giving a dinner to sixty tenant farmers in his country at the "Rising Sun Inn" at Edgehill, while for many years he gave a plate of £50, to be run for at Warwick Races. This he stopped at the request of the Jockey Club, owing to the numerous disputes which arose in regard to qualifications. Those of my readers who are students of Turf history know that in the first half of the century it was necessary for an owner to get a certificate from an M.F.H. that his horse had been ridden regularly to hounds before he could run in a hunters' flat race,

with the result that young horses were shown off at covert-side, and taken home immediately after they had come under the eye of the M.F.H. Owing to his good nature, Lord Middleton often fell a victim to unscrupulous owners, so that he was compelled to abolish the race which he had organised for the benefit of the farmers.

But, in addition to his well-deserved popularity with the farmers, Lord Middleton was supported by men whose names are household words in every fox-hunting establishment. Most prominent amongst these were Lord Willoughby de Broke, the Earl of Aylesford, of Packington Hall, the Earl of Warwick, Sir John Mordaunt, Sir E. Smythe, Sir J. Shelley, Lord Villiers, Mr. Holbeck, of Farnborough, General Williams, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Featherstone, Mr. Cattell, Mr. H. Robins, Mr. T. Handley, Lord Alvanley, Sir Grey Skipwith, Mr. Stubbs, of Beckbury, Shropshire, Mr. Boycott, of Rudge, Shropshire (afterwards M.F.H. of the Albrighton from 1825 to 1830), and Mr. Edward Goulburn.

But it is as a horseman and field-master that Lord Middleton is entitled to be numbered amongst the giants of the hunting-field. As M.F.H. his reign is notable amongst Warwickshire sportsmen, because he gave up the Meriden and Coombe and Dunchurch sides of the country, since it was impossible for one pack of hounds to hunt the whole of the country, for it was forty miles long by twenty miles wide, and comprised what has been since 1853 the North Warwickshire country. It will thus be seen that Lord Middleton

founded the present Warwickshire country. Unfortunately, owing to an accident in the hunting-field which prevented him from riding again, he was compelled to resign his Mastership in 1822, when he was succeeded by Mr. Shirley, who reigned till 1825. He died in 1835.

LORD ALTHORP

Probably no man during the present century has held a more prominent position, not only in hunting and agricultural history but also in political history, than Lord Althorp. Few men have had a career which commands more admiration. He laboured under many great disadvantages, and yet, from sheer honesty of purpose, he rose to prominence in every branch of work which he undertook. His polar star was "duty," and his watchword "thoroughness." He was the eldest son of the second Earl Spencer, by Lavinia, the eldest daughter of Charles Bingham, afterwards first Earl of Lucan, and was born on May 30, 1782, at Spencer House, St. James's.

It was during his last year at Cambridge that his sporting instincts were finally developed. He spent much time and money in hunting and racing, and when he left Cambridge owed several thousands of pounds. The pain it caused him to tell his father this cured him of gambling, especially when he learnt that his father would have to borrow the money to pay the debts. But as his biographer, Sir Denis Le Marchant, says, "he had too big a heart for a gamester," and though he was afterwards associated with many of the biggest gamblers of the century I can find no record of his gambling. The Pytchley woodlands were more to his taste than the saloon at Crockford's.

Lord Althorp reigned over the Pytchley from 1808,

when he purchased the hounds from Mr. John Warde for £1000, till 1817, resigning the Mastership in the latter year in favour of his old friend, Sir Charles Knightley, owing to a bad fall which he sustained in a run from Brampton Wood in November. As an enthusiastic sportsman, I do not believe that Lord Althorp has ever been surpassed in the hunting-field. Eight months out of the twelve he spent in Northamptonshire, and during the cub-hunting season resided for weeks at a cottage at Brigstock, which he shared with Sir Charles Knightley, so as to be near to kennels. Though he was far from being a good horseman, he was an excellent judge of hounds and introduced into his kennels a lighter and quicker build of hound than had been seen before. At first the innovation was unpopular. Mr. John Warde had been in favour of big hounds, especially for the woodlands. But Lord Althorp soon convinced his followers that his opinion was the correct one, such good judges as Sir David Baird and Lord Alvanley being attracted to the Pytchley to learn a lesson from the Master. We must remember, however, that Lord Althorp spent from £4000 to £5000 per annum on his hunting establishment during his Mastership, and he must have met with failures as well as successes in hound-breeding.

His greatest admirers admit that he was a clumsy man on a horse. Both Sir Denis Le Marchant and Mr. Ernest Myers state this, and Lord Althorp knew it to be the case. He put his shoulder out so often that he sent one of his whippers-in to the Northampton

Infirmary, in order that he might be taught how to put it in on an emergency. He rode the best horses that could be bought for money, but owing to his loose seat he was continually tumbling off them. But he was honest enough to confess his faults, and used to say that he always attached himself to a pilot. This was very different from when his father was Master, for it was then considered a breach of etiquette for anybody, excepting the huntsman, to ride in front of the Master. But, though both his father and his grandfather had hunted the Pytchley country, it was not the desire of Lord Althorp that the Pytchley should be considered an hereditary pack, and he was never guilty of autocracy in the hunting-field. He was too much respected for autocracy to be necessary. To those of my readers, who take any delight in comparing fox-hunting and agricultural history with political history, the career of Lord Althorp must present a combination of absorbing interest. As early as 1806 he was appointed a Lord of the Treasury out of compliment to his father, but he retained the office for only thirteen months and rarely attended the House of Commons. Yet in 1830 he was appointed, against his will, Leader of the Opposition, and in the same year became Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Grey. In November 1838, he was offered the choice of the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland or the Governorship of Canada. But, as is well known, he had firmly resolved to retire from political life on the death of his father. A fragment of autobiography found amongst his papers, and published in the preface of Sir Denis

Le Marchant's biography, speaks more conclusively than I can write. These are Lord Althorp's words: "I retire from political life from my own inclination only. But it is satisfactory to me firmly to believe, and to be convinced, that by so doing I give myself greater facilities to become a religious man." Lord Lyttleton wrote in regard to Lord Althorp's retirement from political life that "he told my father it was the cessation of acute pain to him."

MR. GEORGE FORESTER

But, though the private lives of the majority of Masters of Hounds at the beginning of the century were beyond reproach, yet it must be confessed that some of them took advantage of the latitude which was allowed to fox-hunting squires. The most notorious of these was "Squire" George Forester, of Willey, yet he was a thoroughbred specimen of a "fine old English gentleman, who had a great estate," during the first decade of the nineteenth century. He was like a moving plant which receives its nourishment from the air, and he lived chiefly through his senses. His passion for fox-hunting was unbounded. He hunted the country from the Clee Hills to the Wrekin in Shropshire, with the famous Tom Moody as whipper-in, and with such well-known associates as Mr. Dansey, Mr. Childe, Mr. Stubbs, of Beckbury, Squire Boycott, of Rudge, and Parson Stephens. The hospitality of the "Willey" Squire, as he was called, was unbounded. His home at Willey has been immortalised by Dibdin as "Bachelor's Hall." It is no exaggeration to say that few names are better known in the annals of fox-hunting than those of the Willey Squire and Tom Moody.

Was it not Thackeray who wrote: "The England of our ancestors was a merrier England than the island we inhabit?" In many respects it was a healthier England, in spite of the hard-drinking customs of the

age, as can be proved by statistics of longevity. Mr. Forester belonged to the old school of fox-hunters. On hunting mornings he never breakfasted later than 4 A.M., and would be in the saddle at 5 A.M.; then home again to dinner at 3 P.M.

After dinner, eaten with an appetite which only fox-hunting can procure, the carousals were often long and deep.

> "Hark away! Hark away! While our spirits are gay,
> Let us drink to the joys of next meeting day!"

was his motto. But it must not for a moment be supposed that Mr. Forester was what would be termed in these days a drunkard. He only drank after dinner, and not always then, as the following incident will prove. On one occasion Mr. Dansey, Mr. Childe, and Mr. Stubbs were staying with him at Willey, and they had arrived home earlier than usual after their morning's sport. Dinner was served on their arrival, and Mr. Forester proposed an after-dinner run. Needless to say, the proposal was carried *nem. con.*, and Tom Moody was given his instructions. At 3 P.M. they drew for their fox, found him, and hounds accounted for him by moonlight. The run is still spoken of in Shropshire as the Beggarlybrook run. The memory of Mr. Forester has been so often assailed by the cranks who rail at harmless recreation, that it is perhaps necessary to record his public services outside the hunting-field. For many years he represented the borough of Wenlock in the House of Commons, and he was major of the Wenlock Loyal Volunteers, a

regiment raised at the time of the Irish Rebellion in 1798. His conduct towards Dibdin, the poet, is a proof of his good nature and refined feelings. He wished to make Dibdin, who was a poor man, some further recompense for the famous lines on Tom Moody, than had been vouchsafed to him by the publisher, so on one occasion, when Dibdin was returning to London from Willey, he asked him to personally deliver a letter at his London bankers. The letter was an order to pay Dibdin £100. Nor did his kindness end here, for it was through his intercession that Dibdin received a pension from Government when Pitt was in office.

Perhaps Parson Stephens was the most notable visitor at Willey. He was a splendid specimen of the sporting clergyman, a class, alas! now becoming extinct. No man was better known in Shropshire and the Salopian borders of Staffordshire than Parson Stephens, as he was invariably called. Many stories have I heard of him, and his memory is still green in the present Albrighton country, where he was a constant visitor at Rudge Hall. On one occasion, according to Mr. Randall's amusing and instructive book on the Willey country, the mistress of Rudge had presented her lord and master with a baby girl, and Mr. Stephens was asked to christen it. The ceremony took place after dinner, and Mr. Stephens, though he did not usually suffer from deafness, failed to catch the name. On another occasion, when staying at Willey, he had retired early to bed, but waking up hungry he made his way to the larder, with the intention of getting some venison pasty, forgetting that the Squire and his guests

were in the dining-room, the door of which he had to pass during his voyage of discovery. The Squire "twigged" him, and, following him stealthily, turned the key of the larder door when the parson was helping himself to the venison. The parson clamoured to be let out, and the Squire let out a bagged fox while he turned the key. Then the fox hunted the parson through the dining-room, and as pyjamas were not then invented, and the night attire of the period was short and scanty, I shall draw the curtain. But the trouble of the parson did not finish with the hunt, for the Squire compelled him to sing the old song:

> "A parson once had a remarkable foible
> Of loving good liquor far more than his Bible;
> His neighbours all said he was much less perplext
> In handling a tankard than in handling a text."

It is difficult, nor is it of material interest after the lapse of close upon a century, to form an estimate of the Squire's riding ability. One thing, however, is certain, viz., that he possessed unusual powers of endurance in the saddle. Many accounts of the runs with his hounds were published in 1873 by Mr. Randall, F.G.S., who had an exceptional knowledge of Shropshire and its county history. The time and distance both sound miraculous to the ears of modern fox-hunters; but we must remember that hounds did not run as fast as they do in these days. I have before me a record of a run when hounds found their fox on the Clee Hills, and ran through the Needle's Eye at the Wrekin before accounting for their quarry. My readers have only to glance at the map to see the distance which

must have been covered. It has often been suggested to me that these records are exaggerated, but I do not think that there is any truth in the suggestion.

"Thus Tom spoke his friends ere he gave up his breath:
'Since I see you've resolved to be in at the death,
One favour bestow—'tis the last I shall crave—
Give a rattling view-halloa over my grave;
And unless at that warning I lift up my head,
My boys, you may fairly conclude I am dead!'
Honest Tom was obeyed, and the shout rent the sky,
For every one joined in the tally-ho cry."

I have quoted the above lines from Dibdin's well-known poem as the best preface to any mention of Mr. Forester's famous whipper-in. Let me correct at once a statement which I have often heard made, that Tom Moody was Mr. Forester's huntsman. Tom Moody never carried the horn. My authority is Mr. Randall. I mention this, because Tom Moody is constantly referred to as a huntsman, though any native of Shropshire knows at the present day that Mr. Forester hunted his own hounds. So far as posterity is concerned, Tom Moody owes his reputation to Dibdin. He was a bold and fearless rider, but a very wet one. In fact, he was seldom sober on horseback. He would ride any horse at anything or anybody, and he was devoted to his master; but I doubt if a modern M.F.H. would keep him in his employ for a week. Still, there can be little doubt that the Squire encouraged rather than discouraged him in his love of liquor. He would have him into his dining-room and make him drink bumpers of port out of a fox's mask. But if the Squire

compelled Moody to drink, he also compelled him to ride hard. There is a distich in an old hunting poem relating to the Squire :

> " Nicking and craning he deemed a crime ;
> Nobody rode harder, perhaps, in his time."

But the hospitality of Willey was not confined to fox-hunters. An ever-welcome guest was Mr. John Wilkinson, sometimes called the father of the iron trade, and the Squire did everything in his power to promote the commercial interests of Ironbridge, Madeley, Coalbrookdale, and the surrounding districts. He was a man of many parts, and in each part he performed his duty.

The following accounts of the Squire will be found of interest :

" Old Sports and Sportsmen ; or, the Willey Country." By John Randall. 1873. Post 8vo. Sketches of Tom Moody and Squire Forester.

" Tom Moody's Tales." Edited by Mark Lemon. 1864 (1863). 8vo. With 13 plates by H. K. Browne.

MR. JOHN MYTTON

A character similar to Mr. Forester's, if we omit the amorous proclivities, was that of Mr. John Mytton, who died at the early age of thirty-eight. His biography was written by "Nimrod" (Mr. C. J. Apperley) within a year of his death, and is doubtless known to many of my readers, but it contains many misleading statements, some of which have caused pain to Mr. Mytton's descendants and to the descendants of Mr. Mytton's friends. As I have more to say of "Nimrod" elsewhere, I shall content myself with saying, that he was signally oblivious of the Latin proverb—

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum."

But to return to John Mytton. Born on September 30, 1796, and left fatherless before he was two years of age, John Mytton became a mother's spoilt darling. At the age of nineteen he was gazetted a cornet in the 7th Hussars and joined the Army of Occupation in France. But the fighting was over, and young Mytton was advised to resign his commission. On May 21, 1818, he married Harriet Emma Jones, the eldest daughter of Sir Tyrwhitt Jones, Bart. Previous to his marriage he had undertaken the Mastership of the Shropshire and Shifnal Hounds (now the Albrighton Hounds) on the resignation of Mr. Cresset Pelham in 1817, and he continued to hunt the country till the spring of 1821, that is to say, he hunted the present

Albrighton country for five seasons. His huntsman at this time was John Crags, afterwards killed by a fall from his horse, and his whippers-in were Edward Bates, son of Sir Richard Puleston's huntsman, and Richard Jones. During his Mastership he hunted five days a week, and constantly rode fifty miles to covert.

It is from the day of his first marriage that the decline and fall of John Mytton, both in and out of the hunting-field, must be dated. Miss Jones was only in her eighteenth year when she married the Squire of Halston, but she was a recognised beauty at Almack's. This, be it remembered, was in the days of the Regency, when ladies preferred the ball-room to the hunting-field, and bestowed more favours upon a fop, like Beau Brummell, than upon the best man who ever rode across Leicestershire. Yet Miss Jones understood the character of her husband, and tried to reform him. What was Mytton's character at this time? Educated, owing to the insane indulgence of a fond mother, amongst grooms and gamekeepers, and surrounded by boon companions, who only cared to ride his horses and drink his wine, Mytton still retained the instincts of a gentleman in regard to the lady whom he had made his wife. He refused to introduce his boon companions to her. Mr. Apperley writes: "The first Mrs. Mytton conducted herself with coldness to her husband's old friends and companions." The true version of the story is that the first Mrs. Mytton did everything in her power to save her husband from his old friends and companions. Mr. Apperley further states that it was a monomania of Mr. Mytton to keep his wife away from

the society of his friends on account of jealousy. The statement is explained by the fact that Mrs. Mytton disliked Mr. Apperley. In regard to the statement that Mrs. Mytton did not take any interest in her husband's sporting pursuits, it is only necessary to say that she used to accompany her husband every morning—till her health prevented her from doing so—on his visit to his kennels before breakfast. On one occasion, while she was throwing biscuits to the hounds, Mytton slipped the bolt of the kennel gate, as a practical joke. Mrs. Mytton laughed, perhaps the hounds smiled—and Mr. Apperley gravely records the incident as one of masculine brutality, committed by "my old friend." It was also during Mrs. Mytton's lifetime that her husband, as M.F.H. of the present Albrighton Hounds, made his name known in history as a sportsman and as a rider.

He was 5 ft. 9 in. in his socks, and weighed 11 st. on the average, seldom varying more than a pound during the season. But he was a man of abnormal development. His biceps were thicker than those of Jackson, the pugilistic champion of the day, and he measured over 40 in. round the chest; yet his thighs were so small and so weak that it was a marvel to his hunting companions that he managed to retain his seat on a horse. My personal belief is that he rode entirely by the iron grasp of his arms, and left his legs to take care of themselves. Though he was a cruel man to his horses, he seldom used the spur. When he rode his one-eyed horse, Baronet, over nine yards one inch of water (measured from hind leg hoof-marks) in cold blood, he had no spurs.

So many stories have been told of his marvellous jumps that it is unnecessary to repeat them. He was reckless to a degree, which can only be accounted for by the fact that he was seldom responsible for his actions. The popular belief has always been that he drank himself to death ; but, though undoubtedly he was a hard drinker, it is hardly creditable that a man who lived almost entirely in the open air could have died at such an early age through the abuse of alcohol. The more charitable view to take of his death is that it was caused by financial worries arising out of his boundless hospitality. I have always regarded him as a modern Timon of Athens, the victim of circumstances caused by those, who professed to be his friends.

MR. THOMAS ASSHETON SMITH

Probably the performances of no Master of Hounds have been more discussed than have been those of Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith. This hero of the horn and saddle was born in Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, on August 2, 1776. His grandfather, Thomas Assheton, of Ashley Hall, in Cheshire, had assumed the name of Smith on the death of his uncle, Captain William Smith, who died without issue. His mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Watkin Wynn. Before he had completed his eighth year he was sent to Eton, being at the time the youngest boy in the school. Here he remained for eleven years and was chiefly noted for the number of fights in which he was engaged. On one occasion he had a set-to with Mr. "Jack" Musters, which lasted for an hour and a half, by which time the two boys were so knocked about that they could not distinguish each other. But the fight made no difference to their friendship in manhood. Indeed, Smith, not only at Eton but in after life, enjoyed fighting for the mere love of the thing, and he used to declare that if a boy were not well thrashed when he was young he would most probably need it when he became a man. For this reason some writers have portrayed him as an irascible, obstinate man, who was never happy unless he was engaged in a quarrel. This, however, I consider to be a libel, for he was a typical country squire, liberal with

his purse, and popular with all classes of society. Certainly he possessed a dogged determination, which prevented him from understanding the meaning of the word "failure." His obstinacy, if such it may be termed, was the result of his faith in his own convictions. His foundation of the Tedworth Hunt amongst difficulties which appeared, even to his own father, to be insurmountable is an example of the successful issue of his obstinacy. When once he had undertaken to do a thing he never stopped working till he saw that the thing was done. It was this trait in his character which made the Duke of Wellington say of him that he would have made the first cavalry officer in Europe.

From Eton, Tom Smith—for so he was always called till he became, on the death of his father, the Squire of Tedworth—went to Christ Church, Oxford, where he spent four years in playing cricket in the summer and hunting with John Warde's hounds in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire during the winter. His prowess in the cricket-field may be judged from the fact that he was chosen to play in the first "Gentlemen *v.* Players" match. On leaving Oxford, he was able to devote all his energies to fox-hunting, though it was not till 1806 that he first carried the horn. It is interesting to note that at this time, when he left Oxford, his walking weight was 10st., and his height 5ft. 10in., and that at his death his weight was 11st. 10lb., though to the last he was as hard as nails, as might be expected in the case of a man who, for eighty-two years, lived up to the motto—

"Toil strings the nerves and purifies the blood."

In 1806 Tom Smith succeeded Lord Foley as Master of the Quorn, over which he reigned until 1816. He was only thirty years of age, and it was feared that he had undertaken a task beyond his powers. He had earned the reputation of being the best man to hounds in England, but seeds of dissension had been sown in the Quorn country, and there were signs of ill-feeling between the tenant farmers and the foreign hunting-men. Mr. Hugo Meynell, during his long Mastership, had made the Quorn country the most popular in England; but the farmers resented the foreign invasion. Could Tom Smith dispel the ill-feeling? He not only could, but did do so, in spite of what his detractors call his irritability and his inability to brook contradiction. Curiously, it was this irritability which often led him into those pugilistic encounters which endeared him to the Leicestershire graziers. Then his social position was such as to command the respect of the large covert-owners. Moreover, he was the heir of a Hampshire country squire with an unlimited balance at his bankers, and was prepared to hunt the country without any subscription. Still, there can be no doubt that he was apt to be hasty in his temper towards men. On one occasion he was asked why, in spite of his hasty temper, he never allowed himself to be provoked by a horse or a hound. The reply was characteristic of the man. "They are brutes and know no better, but men do." During his Mastership of the Quorn he was chiefly celebrated for the bulldog tenacity with which he would stick to hounds. His ambition was to see the fox run into and to see hounds work, and to satisfy this

ambition he did not hesitate to risk his neck. He loved to boast about the number of masks his hounds had accounted for, but only on two occasions did he mention his own riding. The first was when he said that he could get over any fence in the Harborough country with a fall; the second was when he told a friend, who had advised him to use a martingale with a certain horse, that his left hand was his martingale. He jumped seemingly impossible places with the sole purpose of being with the hounds. No man probably had more falls. Once he had eight falls in a single run, and then was the only man in at the death! Yet he was only seriously hurt twice in his life. However, I have been unable to discover a single instance of his "larking"—*i.e.*, jumping big places for the mere fun of talking about them afterwards. Perhaps the fact which speaks most for his horsemanship is that, until he went into Hampshire, he rarely gave more than fifty pounds for a horse, while his rivals in the hunting-field were generally indifferent to the prices which they gave. The truth appears to be that whatever was under Mr. Smith had to go, and the sympathy which he knew existed between himself and his horse made him indifferent about his mount. But in regard to hounds he was most particular. He bought at first the pick of Mr. Musters' pack of Colwick Hall, Notts, for £1000; and afterwards bought largely from the kennels of Sir Richard Sutton, Sir Thomas Boughey, and the Duke of Grafton. His love for hounds in the hunting-field amounted to a passion, yet he rarely entered his kennels, nor even rode home with his hounds after the business of the day was over.

In 1816 Tom Smith moved to the Burton country, which he hunted till 1824, and in 1828 he went to Panton, near Andover. On October 29, 1827, he married Maria, second daughter of Mr. William Webber, of Bingfield Lodge, Berkshire. He is reported to have said that his sport in Hampshire not only equalled, but far exceeded any that he had had in Leicestershire. This statement has been much cavilled at, and it has been insinuated that he was beginning to lose his nerve. But Smith never lost his nerve till the hour of his death, and nervous insufficiency was to him an unknown quantity which he could not understand. The truth is, that when he moved to Hampshire he had completed his fiftieth year, and would in the ordinary course of nature soon bear upon his shoulders the responsibilities, which it would be impossible for him to attend to in Leicestershire. Besides, it must be remembered that he was a comparative stranger in Leicestershire, while in Hampshire he was the heir of the Squire of Tedworth. On the death of his father he moved to Tedworth Hall, which he restored and enlarged. From that date the future of the Tedworth Hunt was an assured fact. The Squire continued to hunt the country till his death, which took place at his Welsh seat, Vaynol, near Bangor, in August 1858, at the ripe age of eighty-two, when he had been an M.F.H. for fifty-two years.

During his career as an M.F.H. his best-known Hunt servants were Jack Shirley, ex-huntsman to Lord Sefton, Dick Burton, Joe Harrison, and Tom Wingfield; but the Squire invariably carried the horn

himself. To the last he was as keen as in his young days, regarding November 1 as the day when the woodlands were stripped for business. A political friend once suggested to him that the cultivation of corn would cease, owing to free trade. The Squire replied, "So much the better, for I shall ride over a grass country." The last hunting act of his life was to review the 1858 entry, when he said to Carter, his kennel huntsman, "Well, they seem as beautiful as they can be." At his death he had ninety couples of hounds in the kennel and thirty-nine horses in the stable.

Though he was a member of the Jockey Club, and during one year had three horses in training, he never took any active interest in flat racing; nor did he take pains to conceal his disgust with the chicanery of the turf. On one occasion a bill for £300 was handed round for discount in the Jockey Club rooms, for which the highest offer was three hundred pence, both drawer and acceptor being known to be under a cloud. Smith looked at the signatures, saw that they were those of two old schoolfellows, immediately gave a cheque for the full amount, and put the bill behind the fire. As a landlord, he conscientiously fulfilled his duties, nor did he neglect the business of his Welsh quarries. It was, indeed, his summer delight to entertain large house-parties at Vaynol and to explain to his guests the working of the quarries, or to take them in his yacht round the coast.

MR. GEORGE OSBALDESTON

Few men have done more towards making sporting history than "Squire" George Osbaldeston. In regard to the hunting-field, he was described in the *Quarterly Review* as the "Hercules of Horsemen." "Nim" South likens him to "two single gentlemen rolled into one." "Nimrod," Brooksby, and nearly every writer who has written about Leicestershire, have published their opinions of the Squire, together with anecdotes and personal reminiscences. Yet, with the exception of obituary notices, no authentic history of the celebrated sportsman has been published, though at the time of his decease, in August 1866, it was announced that his widow intended to write his biography. Probably the stupendous nature of the task has deterred most sporting writers from attempting it, since there is plenty of authentic material for an exhaustive biography, and there are many of the Squire's intimate associates still alive who could depict those side-scenes, by the help of which we can more readily understand the real character of a man who has attained notoriety. But the Squire was ubiquitous. He was a M.F.H. for thirty-five seasons, during several of which he hunted six days a week. He was an owner of racehorses, and rode both on the flat and cross-country. He performed one of the greatest feats of endurance in regard to horsemanship on record, when he undertook to ride two hundred miles in ten consecutive hours, and

covered the distance within one hour and eighteen minutes of the specified time. He was accounted the best pigeon-shot in England in the palmy days of "The Red House," when Lord Kennedy, General Anson, and Captain Ross were in the zenith of their shooting fame. He was a devoted patron of the P.R. and acted as referee in the big fight between Bendigo and Caunt at Newport Pagnell. Till within a short time of his death he was a regular player in the billiard-room of the Portland Club. In his younger days he had the reputation of being, with the exception of Lord Frederick Beauclerk, the best all-round cricketer of the time. Nor was his career confined to sport, for he was a J.P. for the East Riding of Yorkshire, represented East Retford in the House of Commons from 1812 to 1818, and was High Sheriff in 1829. According to "Nimrod," who was far from being a lenient critic, "in society he is affable and communicative, perfectly free from the absurdity of affectation, and just what an English country gentleman should be."

The Squire was born in 1787, and was the son of George Osbaldeston, of Hutton Bushel, in Yorkshire, by Jane, the only daughter of Sir Thomas Head, Bart. Unfortunately, his father died in 1794, when he was in his seventh year, so that in his boyhood he did not experience the paternal correction which he certainly needed. At Eton he was continually getting into scrapes, but for him flogging had no terrors. Not that he appears to have been a bad boy. His delinquencies were mainly the result of high spirits, an utter disregard for school discipline, and incorrigible idleness

so far as the mysteries of Latin and Greek were concerned. Upon leaving Eton he became the private pupil of Doctor Carr, then Vicar of Brighton, and subsequently Bishop of Chichester, who managed with great difficulty to prepare him for Oxford, where he matriculated at Brasenose on May 3, 1805; but he left Oxford without taking his degree, as might only have been expected, since he had already taken M.F.H. honours before he went up. In boyhood he had received his first riding lessons, while living with his mother at Bath, from Dash, the most celebrated riding-master of the day, and after leaving Eton he bought a pack of dwarf foxhounds from Lord Jersey, with which he hunted over his mother's property near Scarborough; but I have been unable to discover any record of the sport which he was able to show, though to this period must be attributed his education in hound lore. His first country after leaving Oxford was the Burton, which he hunted for five seasons with hounds purchased from Lord Monson, from which sprang the celebrated Monson strain. Osbaldeston—it was not till he became Master of the Quorn that he was called the Squire—now began to prove his practical knowledge of kennel work. Even at the present day his hound Vaulter is a name to conjure with in kennel circles. Osbaldeston was fond of saying that Vaulter was the only perfect thing in the world, for he had never told a lie. After five seasons in the Burton country he moved into Nottinghamshire, to what was then known as Mr. Jack Musters' country. Differences of opinion, which it is unnecessary now to discuss, ensued.

Mr. Musters would not allow him the use of the old kennels, so he was obliged to build new kennels at Thurgaton, while there were other causes which gave rise to friction. Osbaldeston soon abandoned the country and went to the Atherstone, to which the Derbyshire country had just been united, and commenced his reign by drafting the best part of Lord Vernon's pack into his own. Here he remained till Mr. Assheton-Smith resigned the Mastership of the Quorn in 1817, by which time, to quote the words of "Nimrod," he had raised himself to the very pinnacle of fame as a breeder of hounds. Practically he reigned over the Quorn till 1828, when he was succeeded by Lord Southampton, though for fourteen months he was out of the saddle, owing to a compound fracture of the leg, sustained through Sir James Musgrave jumping on the top of him. Those who witnessed the accident, amongst whom was "Nimrod," thought that he would never ride again, and it was only the untiring nature of his constitution which enabled him to do so. As it was, he was always afterwards nervous at being crowded at his fences. For one season after he resigned the Quorn to Lord Southampton he was out of office. Then the Pytchley became vacant, and the Squire, as he was now universally called, took up his quarters at Pitsford, then the residence of Mr. Payne. He also hunted the Thurlow country, in Suffolk, travelling overnight from one country to the other. The infirmities of age and a diminished income finally obliged him to relinquish the horn. His hounds were sold at Tattersall's, when six couples fetched 1360

guineas, Mr. Harvey Combe purchasing them for the Old Berkeley country.

As a horseman, the Squire was *facile princeps*. In appearance he had little of what is usually understood by the term "sporting." He was rather below the middle size, with a large and muscular frame, legs somewhat disproportioned to the body, appearing, when on horseback, to belong rather to the animal than to the man, so firm and steady was his seat. His weight was eleven stone. His qualities as a huntsman have given rise to much difference of opinion, though there can be no doubt about his assiduity and zeal, two qualities which go far towards counterbalancing minor shortcomings. It has been said that he wanted a little more command of temper, and that when he lost his temper he lost his fox. Certainly it could not be asserted of him, as was asserted of Sir Edward Littleton's huntsman, that he was never heard either to laugh or to swear. Dick Christian had far from a high opinion of him as a huntsman, for he wrote: "He was the oddest man you ever saw at a covert-side. He would talk for an hour; then he would half draw and talk again, and often blow his horn when there was no manner of occasion, but he was always so chaffy." Another authority says: "His one fatal mistake was not keeping his huntsman, Tom Sebright, whose assistance he often needed in the field after he had gone to Earl Fitzwilliam. When the Squire was *hors de combat*, after the accident already referred to, Sebright, with Dick Burton to whip-in to him, hunted the country with satisfaction to everybody." But the

Squire was ambitious to hunt his own hounds, which he did six days a week, a feat which only one other gentleman-huntsman, namely, Lord Darlington, has ever achieved. He invariably rode to covert, and when asked on one occasion whether he should drive to Widmerpool, as the roads were good, replied, "Oh no; there is nothing like the pigskin." He was also extremely fair towards his foxes, believing, with the great Meynell, that murdering foxes is a most absurd prodigality, for seasoned foxes are as necessary to sport as experienced hounds. His zeal cannot be questioned. On one occasion in 1825, having drawn three coverts blank, a rare experience in Leicestershire, he observed that there was a moon, and he would draw till the next morning, but that he would find a fox. As it happened, he found one at the next covert. Nor did he spare any expense in providing his followers with sport, for once, when hounds had met at Owelthorpe, in Nottinghamshire, at 2 P.M., a clean pack of hounds with a clean stud of horses were turned out from the inn at Widmerpool. Even in those days the Leicestershire fields of hunting-people had assumed abnormal proportions and tried the patience of the Squire; and it must be remembered that the Squire had once been nearly killed by a man jumping on the top of him, so he may be excused if he occasionally lost his temper with the thrusting scoundrels who would not give him room at his fences.

To recount his feats of horsemanship alone would fill a volume. Once, at the beginning of a good run, his girths broke, so he threw the saddle away and rode

bare-backed to the finish! But it was in 1831, when he was in his forty-fifth year, that he performed the feat which has gained for him the greatest fame with posterity when at Newmarket Houghton Meeting he made a bet of a thousand guineas that he would ride two hundred miles in ten consecutive hours, the number and choice of horses to be unlimited. He divided the distance into heats of four miles each, and, though he stopped to lunch off a partridge and cold brandy and water, and was thrown in the second hundred miles, when odds of ten to one were freely laid against him, he won this match against time by one hour eighteen minutes. He died August 1, 1866.

MR. TOM SMITH

It is a curious coincidence in fox-hunting history that there should have been two Tom Smiths who were M.F.H.s at the same time, and that one should write a biography of the other. Mr. Tom "Gentleman" Smith, as he was called to distinguish him from Mr. Tom Assheton-Smith, was Master of the Hambledon Hounds from 1824, when he succeeded Mr. Shard, of Hill Place, till 1829. Then he reigned over the Craven Hunt from 1829 till 1833, and subsequently was Master of the Pytchley from 1840 till 1842. Afterwards Mr. Smith returned to the Hambledon, which he hunted till 1852. It has often been said that "Gentleman" Smith's reputation was eclipsed by that of his namesake. Comparisons are odious, but nobody will deny that "Gentleman" Smith is entitled to be ranked amongst the giants of the hunting-field. Mr. Nethercote, the recognised historian of the Pytchley Hunt, writes of him: "A more thorough master of the noble science, or one whose thoughts were more completely engrossed in the ways of fox and hounds, probably never carried a horn." It must be remembered that Mr. Smith succeeded Lord Chesterfield in the Pytchley country, and it was no light matter to follow such a prince as the Lord of Bretby; yet, confident in his ability to show sport, Mr. Smith ventured upon the responsibility of getting an establishment together. Certainly he entered into office with a great reputation

from both the Hambledon and Craven countries, and he had used his pen as well as his horn in the promotion of sport. But he was hampered in finance, and probably had the worst lot of horses and hounds that had ever been seen in Northamptonshire. The hounds were a portion of Lord Chesterfield's pack, which were purchased by the Hunt for the small sum of £400 after twenty couples had been sent to Lord Ducie. These twenty couples were all hung, because they were so incorrigibly wild. So much for the hounds. The horses varied in value from £20 to £60. Yet, during the two seasons of Mr. Smith's reign, there was an amount of sport which had never been equalled during the Mastership of Lord Chesterfield. Jack Goddard was his first, and Jones his second, whipper-in during his stay in the Pytchley country, when he lived *en garçon* in Brixworth. But the subscriptions were not sufficient to enable him to hunt four days a week and meet all the difficulties of a weak establishment; so at the end of his second season he resigned office, and the Pytchley, for the seventh time in ten years, were seeking a new Master. But Mr. Smith had fulfilled a wholesome duty towards fox-hunting. He had succeeded Lord Chesterfield, who, generally popular as he was, had been surrounded by companions who turned night into day and wounded the prejudices of the country squires. Not only did he keep them waiting at the meet, but often the delay was caused by the non-arrival of the celebrated Nelly Holmes, who, though afterwards a lady of title, was at no time an ornament to the social *morale*. There was

a taint in the hunting atmosphere which Mr. Smith succeeded in removing.

But Mr. Smith had also the reputation of being a recognised literary authority on everything appertaining to the noble science. His "Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman" had been published in 1838, and a second edition was called for in 1841. He says in his Preface that he had killed ninety foxes in ninety-one days' hunting one season in a bad-scenting country. He alluded to the Craven country, though I should hardly call the Craven a bad-scenting country. In any case, the book is still regarded as an authority, more especially in regard to foxes. Mr. Smith did not believe that foxes cared about feather. His own words are: "That they do prefer rabbits is easily proved to be the case by confining in some place a fox and with him a rabbit, and every other sort of food live or dead, that can be thought of, and he will take the rabbit first for a certainty. This is not a great reason, but the great reason why keepers dislike foxes, for every fox destroys rabbits in one year sufficient to supply the keeper with gin; consequently when he sees a fox he loses his spirits as well as his temper." The moral, of course, is that gentlemen who wish well to hunting should not allow their keepers to sell the rabbits. Mr. Smith declares that he never saw three places where a pheasant had been destroyed by a fox during the whole time he hunted hounds, although constantly looking whenever he went in coverts abounding in pheasants and foxes at the same time.

"As well as shape, full well he knows,
To kill their fox they must have nose."

Mr. Smith was a great advocate for spaying young light and weedy bitches. He declared that it improved the nose, and that the spayed bitches often became the best cold hunters in the pack, although very indifferent before, and far better than the sisters which were not spayed, while they hunt generally several years longer than open bitches. Moreover, the cheapest pack of foxhounds to keep is a pack of spayed bitches, as they do more work with less food than any others. I do not dispute it for a moment, but what would be the value of such a pack? Besides, most M.F.H.s are anxious to become famous for breeding good hounds. Mr. Smith also advocated cutting dog-hounds which are slight and weedy, maintaining that it improves their nose.

By way of change, Mr. Smith tried cub-hunting in the afternoon instead of in the early morning, leaving the kennels about 4 P.M. and commencing about 5 P.M., which certainly is more agreeable than getting up in the middle of the night. I will relate his experience in his own words (*vide* "Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman," second edition, p. 52):

"The consequence is the cubs are by that time moving, and soon found; and the longer you run the cooler it is, instead of getting broiled with heat at nine or ten in the morning. The result was the cubs took more time to kill than in the morning, probably owing to their being more fit to run, being lighter. But the later it was the cooler it was also; and, consequently,

the hounds were never so much distressed as in the heat of the morning, which increased as the hounds got tired. But, however agreeable it may be, it is not so much like business as if in the morning; the men have a great deal to do afterwards, and it disarranges the establishment. But still it is a more gentlemanlike hour for a man who hunts his own hounds, and on a quiet evening nothing can exceed the pleasurable feeling it creates. One of the greatest objections to it is that many men are induced to ride out at that time with the hounds who would not early in the morning, and nothing is more annoying to a huntsman than having strange horses in the rides when the young hounds first enter and the pack are running in cover; it cuts them off and prevents them getting about with the huntsman, and they get ridden over, either owing to their own awkwardness or that of the horse or rider. Therefore it is best not to make known when they are going, at all events, unless those who do go out go with the understanding that they are not to expect sport, or get in the way of hounds. . . . Although the writer is not aware that this plan has ever been adopted by any other person, still he is bold enough to assert that it is a good one, and beyond all doubt most agreeable."

I must now refer briefly to his private history. He was the son of Mr. Thomas Smith, of Shaldon Lodge, near Alton, Hants, and was born on August 5, 1870. His love of sport as a youngster was so great, that his father wisely removed him from Eton to Holybourne, close to Alton, where he could indulge in

sport; for his father, who was also a noted fox-hunter, gave the son every encouragement in hunting. Smith at this time held his first Mastership of hounds, for he used to worry the hares on the family property with all the curs he could collect in the neighbourhood. He occasionally got a peep at the Hampshire Hounds, but he was first regularly blooded in the New Forest, then hunted by the celebrated John Ward, who took a great fancy to him, and a cordial intimacy sprang up between the two. He then went to Devonshire on a sporting tour, hunting with Lord Portsmouth's fox-hounds, Sir Arthur Chichester's stag-hounds, and Mr. Treby's otter-hounds. In 1824 he purchased Mr. Shard's pack and hunted the Hambledon country, where, with only thirty-two couples of hounds, and a subscription of under £600, he showed excellent sport for many years, till he was succeeded by Mr. John King, who came from Devonshire. In 1828 he accepted the Mastership of the Craven, and his first step was to vindicate the right of the Craven to certain coverts, which had been lent to the adjoining Hunts, viz., the Vine, Sir John Cope's, Mr. Assheton Smith's, and Lord Ducie's. The task was a delicate one, which might have created many feuds, but such was the tact, with which Mr. Smith conducted it, that only Mr. Assheton Smith dissented from the position, which he had taken up. Here for a short time there was danger of a long rupture. A covert called the South Grove Covert belonged to King's College, of which Mr. Smith's brother was a fellow; the result was that King's College authorities served Mr. Assheton Smith with a

notice forbidding him to draw it. After a time, however, the tempers of each cooled down. The Squire was re-admitted to South Grove Covert on sufferance, and the two Tom Smiths became firm and fast friends. Six months after his surrender of the Craven in 1833 Mr. Smith married, for the second time, Miss Denison, of Ossington, the sister of Mr. Evelyn Denison, the speaker of the House of Commons, and we do not hear of him again, in connection with hounds, till he accepted the Mastership of the Pytchley, to which I have already alluded. On retiring from the Pytchley country he went on a Continental tour, when he received numberless attentions from the foreign nobility on account of his fame as a sportsman. On his return he went back to the Hambledon country, which he hunted till April 3, 1852, when the meet was at Broadhalfpenny. It was known to be his good-bye day, and all sporting Hampshire was out. As a sportsman Mr. Smith might well have taken the motto, *Nulli secundus.* Fox-hunting was the sport he loved best, but he was also a first-rate cricketer and an experienced otter hunter, and he could kill a salmon with Sir Humphry Davy. He was also an excellent draughtsman, as witness the illustrations to his own books, and had a taste for mechanics, having invented a threshing-machine in his younger days; and he was such a good farmer that he realised the highest prices for wheat that had ever been obtained in the county. In every way is he entitled to the praise of posterity.

SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN

There are many families in which M.F.H. honours may be regarded as hereditary. The Wynn family is certainly one of these, and the present head of the family ably keeps up the tradition. But it is of his predecessor, the sixth baronet, who was born in 1820, and succeeded to the title in 1840, that I wish now to write. Not only was he the largest hereditary landlord in Wales, but he was an hereditary M.F.H., for his great-grandfather was as celebrated for his love of sport as he was for his Jacobite opinions; and when, in 1745, he was compelled to quit Wales, he found sporting hospitality with the Duke of Beaufort at Badminton.

At the early age of twenty-three Sir Watkin revived the pack which his father had given up in 1837. Two years before he had purchased the hounds of Mr. Leche, of Sarden Park, a member of one of the oldest fox-hunting families in Cheshire, and an intimate sporting friend of the Wynns. Mr. Attye had hunted the Wynnstay country from Lightwood Hall, a farm of Sir Watkin's in the centre of the country, for the two seasons, during which the Baronet was detained in London by his military duties. In 1843 Sir Watkin bought the Perthshire from Mr. Grant, of Kilgraston, the eldest brother of Mr. Frank Grant, the celebrated artist, and erected new kennels at Wynnstay, which for space, modern improvements, and conveniences were surpassed by none. Sir Watkin never lost an

opportunity to improve his pack. Money was no object to him; thus, he gave 390 guineas for five couple of hounds at Mr. Foljambe's sale, from which strain was descended the famous stallion hound, Royal. He also purchased some of the best lots at the sales of Mr Musters, Mr. Story, and Sir Richard Sutton. In regard to his horses, they were considered as fine a lot of weight-carriers as it is possible to see in any stable, for in his case the old saying that "heavy weights make short stables" was not applicable. Major Cotton, McGrane of Dublin, and John Darby of Rugby were the men, whom he generally entrusted to buy for him. He invariably bought young horses, which were quietly ridden about by Simpson, his stud groom, and then, when they had had two years of Wynnstay oats and hay in them, if found good enough, they generally carried their master for some years. His horses in his early days were always well bred, never less than sixteen hands high, with the very best of shoulders, legs, and feet. Usually, in spite of his great weight, he rode the same horse all day, until hounds turned their heads towards Wynnstay kennels.

On March 6, 1858, Sir Watkin suffered a terrible calamity, which caused him to relinquish the hounds to Colonel Cotton. Wynnstay, with nearly all its contents, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss of works of art was irreparable, and the total loss sustained was estimated at near £50,000. It is worthy of record that the object he made the most strenuous exertions to save from the flames, and in which he was successful, was the picture of himself and hounds presented to

him by the Wynnstay Hunt. Fortunately, though the house was full of guests and servants, there was no loss of life or personal injury to any one. A witness of the scene describes it thus: "It was a fearful sight we saw when we reached Wynnstay; the whole neighbourhood seemed to be collected in front of the burning ruins on the lake side of the house—labourers, colliers, and friends huddled together in one confused mass, the gale blowing the sparks of fire high up into the air and many engines playing on the ruins apparently without the slightest effect." Sir Watkin and Lady Williams Wynn bore their misfortunes with a bravery that could not be excelled, but Sir Watkin, having no residence, from which he could hunt the country, decided to go abroad, and on May 8, being the Saturday in Chester race week, his magnificent stud of hunters came to the hammer, and realised the record average of that period, though it must be remembered that in those days the hunting public was not educated to give sensational prices.

But when the hunting season 1859–60 commenced, Sir Watkin and his staff were once more at Wynnstay, and hunting was resumed, as if there had been no interregnum. Walker, commonly called "Merry" John Walker, carried the horn, and showed capital sport till 1865, when gout compelled him to relinquish the arduous and responsible duties of hunting a pack of fox-hounds four days a week, though afterwards he was constantly seen at covert-side, for there were few members of the Hunt who were not ready to give him a mount whenever he wanted one. He was succeeded

by Charles Payne, of Pytchley celebrity, who remained with the Wynnstay Hounds till 1883, which was the last season that Sir Watkin was seen in the hunting-field on horseback, his last appearance being at Gresford on April 7, 1883, when his friends could not help but notice what ravages disease had made in him. His clothes hung about him, and to a large extent his spirits, hitherto good, had left him. For the last four or five years he had but seldom seen his own hounds.

Just a few words of Sir Watkin Wynn as a Master of Fox-hounds. Though never a flyer, he had an extraordinary knack of getting over the country. He would creep through blind places, drop his horse into a road, jump the Aldersey Brook at a stand, and never lose the line of his hounds. In his heyday he always rode big horses, but latterly he had ridden strong cobby horses, and tested their understandings pretty well down all sorts of roads, that younger and lighter men would have shuddered at it, with a loose rein at full gallop. Mr. T. H. G. Puleston writes of him: "Sir Watkin had a strong seat, a light hand, good nerve, and a quick eye to hounds; he never pulled his horses' mouths about, and, therefore, though he courted one very often by galloping down all sorts of lanes, and cramming his horses through blind places, he seldom had a fall, and never, we believe, a serious one. He seldom, if ever, 'flew' a fence, but trained his horses to jump the widest ditches, and even the Grafton and Aldersey Brooks at a stand, to creep through a thick, blind fence with a big ditch on the other side; then, when he dropped his hand, his horse jumped, and

immediately he scuttled away as fast as the horse could gallop. Thus he got over the country amazingly, and has puzzled and surprised many a young one who followed him to see what places his horses carried him through or over, apparently with the greatest ease."

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT

I do not think that I could conclude this chapter more fitly than by recalling a few reminiscences of the seventh Duke of Beaufort, father of the late Duke. The fame of the late Duke, both as a writer on hunting subjects and as an M.F.H., is so world-wide that modern hunting-men may be excused for forgetting the good services which his father rendered to "the sport of kings." These services were rendered at a time when the hereditary autocracy of the hunting-field was being supplanted by the modern system of subscription packs. His reign as an M.F.H. began on November 23, 1835, when he succeeded to the title on the death of his father, and lasted till he died on November 17, 1853, though for three years prior to his decease he had been unable to ride to hounds, owing to rheumatic gout. Yet his science of hunting was so correct that it was said of him that he could kill his fox in a bath-chair. Certainly he was constantly in at the death, when driving or being driven in his phaeton behind his well-known pied horses. I heed hardly add that his fox-hunting instincts were transmitted both to his son and his grandson, the present Duke.

John Henry Somerset, seventh Duke of Beaufort, Marquis and Earl of Worcester, Earl of Glamorgan, Viscount Grosmount, Baron Herbert of Chepstow, Raglan, and Gower, Baron Beaufort of Caldecot Castle, and Baron de Botetourt, K.G., was born on February 5,

1792. In 1810 he joined the 10th Hussars, and from 1812 to 1814 was on the staff as aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular War. In those day constituents were not so anxious in regard to their representatives fulfilling their duties as they are in modern times, for in 1813, when only twenty-one years of age, the Marquis of Worcester, as his courtesy title then was, was returned to the House of Commons as M.P. for Monmouth, a seat which he retained till 1832. In 1835 he was elected M.P. for West Gloucestershire. His political principles were those of extreme Toryism. He was the friend and political associate of Lord Lyndhurst, who was then regarded as the head of the Conservative party in the Upper House, and joined with him in opposing the Reform Bill. It was also through his energy that the Succession Act of 1835 was passed. It may be said in regard to his public life, outside the hunting-field, that his godfathers were the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst. But it is not my duty to write about his political career or the services which he rendered to his party. I mention them briefly, because it is the fashion to consider the ancient giants of the hunting-field as men who devoted their physical and intellectual energies solely to sport. Such was not the case, though Lord Macaulay took pains to sneer at them.

On Wednesday, November 16, 1853, the last day with the seventh Duke of Beaufort's hounds took place. The meet was at Yate Turnpike, and after two excellent runs hounds accounted for their quarry, both in the morning and in the afternoon. The day is

marked as a red-letter day in the records of the Badminton Hunt. At that time a correspondent, writing over the initials "H.M.G.," regularly forwarded accounts of Badminton sport to *Bell's Life*. After recounting the points of this day's sport he adds these words, which I quote, since they are an epitaph, written by one, who knew the late Duke of Beaufort both in and out of the hunting-field: "But there is no sunshine without a cloud. While we were enjoying this sport a change for the worse had taken place in the health of His Grace, who had for the last three weeks suffered much from neuralgic pains flying all over the body, though without fear of immediate danger. Exhausted nature, however, sank under continued suffering, and he died without a struggle on Thursday, at 2 P.M., in the sixty-first year of his age. He had been unable to ride on horseback for the last three years from anchylosed joints from gout, but has constantly, when his health permitted, been present at the meets in a phaeton drawn by his celebrated pied horses. As a nobleman and as a Master of Hounds he had no equal in courteousness of manner and affability to all in the hunting-field. The highest and lowest, the rich and poor, the lettered and unlettered, all had a mark of recognition with such a gracious manner as seemed to raise those whom he addressed to his own level, instead of that insulting condescension which many of the would-be great people practise. His management of the field made him much beloved. A good sportsman himself, he kept his field in order without the acerbity often met with elsewhere. No

day was too long; indeed, the Beaufort Hounds have been notorious for drawing later than any other hounds in England. As a rider to hounds he was a few years ago a very good man, preferring timber and walls to hedges, from the fact that, if he had a blow, it was sure to bring on an attack of the gout. In conclusion, he could not be surpassed for gentlemanly bearing." This epitaph, of which his descendants may be proud, is only one out of several. In the *Illustrated London News* of November 26, 1853, his hunting career was described and his portrait was published. A short, though incomplete biography appeared in regard to him in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1854. Mr. Apperley ("Nimrod") writes of him in chapter viii. of his "Hunting Reminiscences" as a typical M.F.H. He is portrayed in "The Royal Hunt" and in "The Badminton Hunt" amongst the portraits of the prominent fox-hunters of the period. Any further epitaph from my pen would be superfluous, for

> "He who excels in what we prize
> Appears a hero in our eyes."

There is no doubt that in the field the Duke was a bold horseman and the pattern of an M.F.H. Doubts have been expressed about his knowledge of kennel lore; but I do not think that they have any foundation in fact. He prided himself upon being a scientific breeder of hounds, and was ably assisted in his experiments by his huntsman, Philip Payne. In his early days he considered that hounds should be big, *i.e.*, he bred for size and weight, as Mr. Hugo Meynell

did; but in later life he sacrificed size for pace. But I am sure that at all times he bred his hounds for the country over which they were intended to hunt.

> "Thus are my eyes still captive to one sight;
> Thus all my thoughts are slaves to one thought still."

So should it be with an M.F.H. Therefore I venture to think that the Duke's system was right, viz., to breed hounds for the country over which they are intended to hunt, irrespective of the dogmas laid down by hound judges. His favourite relaxation was fox-hunting, and he fully maintained the fox-hunting traditions of Badminton during the crucial period in the annals of the sport. Upon his succession to the title and estates, hunting was regarded as a manorial right, which even the most advanced Whigs did not dare to question. Before his death the law and the public opinion of the country had completely metamorphosed the relationships between landlord and tenant. The Duke was a strong Tory, with the courage to announce his convictions; yet such was his personal popularity as a landlord, and his tact as an M.F.H., that no friction ever arose between him and the occupiers of the land. Finally, it is a subject for congratulation in hunting circles, that there is no danger of the Beaufort prestige in the world of sport dying out for want of support.

From a photograph by Mrs. Ricardo

LT.-COL. G. C. RICARDO

SECRETARY CRAVEN HUNT. MASTER FROM 1886–1892

PLATE IV

CHAPTER IV

THE MASTER'S EXPENSES

(By Lieutenant-Colonel G. C. RICARDO, Secretary Craven Hunt. Master 1886–1892)

Contrast between present and past—Increase of subscription packs—Claims for damages—Shooting tenants—Purchasing horses—Stud required in the shires—Do the thing well or leave it—Price of horses—Wages of servants — Shoeing — Straw — Hay—Oats — Meal—Coal—Saddlery and horse clothing—Whips, spurs, and horns —Clothes and Boots—Flesh account—Taxes and licences —Travelling and medicine—The huntsman's petty account—Repairs and miscellaneous—Table of expenditure—Puppy show: Walking and breeding—Poultry claims—Wire—Earth-stopping, finds, and litters—Capping—Subscriptions and, incidentally, of ladies—Concluding hints

THE whole question of the cost of hunting from the Master's point of view is one that involves side issues enough to fill a volume by themselves, and it is only possible in the present chapter to touch on the main features of his expenditure.

It is commonly argued that fox-hunting has become more and more costly, and the M.F.H. is supposed to have suffered in this respect even more than those who follow hounds in other capacities. Yet, as an old M.F.H. of some ten or twelve years ago, and with

some little knowledge of how matters stand at the present day, I cannot believe that there has been any marked change.

There certainly are far more subscription packs than there were even twenty years ago, but the causes of this increase must be sought elsewhere than in the growing costliness of the sport. There are, for instance, fewer wealthy noblemen who care, even if expense be no object, for all the worry and trouble entailed in managing a pack of their own. In this pleasure-seeking age, too, rich men have many other outlets for extravagance, not a few of which give them "more fun for their money" than they would in all probability derive from keeping a pack of hounds at their own expense.

Apart, indeed, from all question of outlay, it may be questioned whether the pleasure of being a Master is by any means what it was in those good old days when wire was unheard of, when poultry claims were reckoned by pounds instead of by hundreds, and when you could hunt as you pleased from one end of the county to the other without having to ask leave from the shooting-tenant, then an almost unknown factor. In those vanished times the Master would call on the farmer's wife in the course of his morning's ride, drink a glass or two of famous old home-brewed in her best parlour, the while he lent a sympathetic ear to her story of the loss of a few head of poultry, and eventually made everything right by the present of a new silk gown.

How differently are all these affairs managed under

the new *régime*. An enormous claim is nowadays sent in by every poultry-farmer who is too ignorant or too lazy to protect his caged-up fowls with high wire fencing topped by a couple of strands of barbed wire, which finds its legitimate use in this protection of live animals of the farmyard. Very few foxes will jump barbed wire; not one, it is safe to say, will do so if it has once had a fall over it; and such a barrier will also keep out the two-legged thief for whose misdemeanours the poor maligned fox is not seldom made the scapegoat.

Well, the immense claim is duly sent in, and it then has to be minutely investigated by a committee specially appointed for the purpose of paring such demands down to their lowest terms. The whole negotiations usually terminate in an undignified wrangle, with the result that either the committee is compelled to pay up in full or else the Master has personally to intervene. The latter alternative is, particularly where the Master is a native of the country, distinctly preferable, for no matter how indefatigably the secretary labour in the performance of his difficult duties, it is the Master who generally possesses the happy knack of being able to smooth over such differences as may arise within his jurisdiction. Such, at any rate, was my experience in connection with the Hunt of which I was successively Master and Secretary.

The tactful handling of a cantankerous shooting-tenant is particularly the Master's job, and he must have very special qualifications if he is to undertake many such adjustments of obviously conflicting

interests. Most of us concerned in such matters can recall cases in which the officious friend has made bad worse and a wide chasm of a slender rift, by blundering in his intervention between his old schoolfellow the Master and his firm friend the shooting-man. That the latter has a perfect right to shoot his coverts when and how he thinks fit is undeniable. The harm is done when he carries beyond reasonable bounds (from the hunting standpoint) his objection to having those coverts drawn by hounds for some weeks before the shoot. The degree to which the shooting-tenant is justified in pressing his privilege of exclusion largely depends on the number of hares in his coverts. The mere fact of hounds drawing will of course make hares lie out for days, and it may take a small army of keepers half a week to get them back again. Where, however, there are no hares, it does not signify at all if hounds draw the coverts, for the pheasants, even if they leave the covert for a day, will certainly return at night to the particular covert in which they are fed or where they have their particular barley stack. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that hounds do not inspire in pheasants quite all the fear that the keepers would have us believe; and, after a covert has been drawn once or twice, the birds take very little notice, but merely perch high out of their reach, or fly to the other end of the covert. If, of course, rabbits are stopped out they will naturally scratch in again a little, and it is probably the slight extra labour entailed on them that the keepers resent.

It may look as if in the course of these preliminary remarks I have wandered from my subject, but this is

not in reality the case, for the increasing preservation of game has a powerful, if indirect, influence on the cost of hunting.

Although in these days a Master must be prepared, with the purchase of horses and what not, to spend a good deal of his own money, since very few Hunt subscriptions come within measurable distance of the actual expense, I shall always maintain that the actual cost of keeping a pack of hounds varies but little in whatever country they hunt. There is, of course, the difference in the cost of horseflesh in a big, fashionable country, as well as the increased number of animals required, but that is a separate matter. It must, however, be taken into account. Whereas, for instance, a stud of twelve sound and useful horses should be ample for the Hunt servants in an ordinary typical provincial country, they would require at the least eighteen or twenty in a big, flying country. The reasons for the distinction are obvious: the casualties would be more numerous, and the horses themselves would come out less often. It would be futile to expect to mount a staff in the Shires for less than a hundred pounds a horse, whereas in an ordinary country the whippers-in can ride young ones at half the money.

It is, however, false economy to mount your men badly, unfair to them, and damaging to sport, for the huntsman who cannot depend on his horse is worse than useless, while if the whips cannot get their mounts over tight places or get them along fast enough to turn hounds, they might just as well, for all practical purposes, remain at home. Moreover, a discontented

establishment does not conduce to popularity in the field. Nothing, in fact, annoys a Hunt more than a stingy Master. It is taken by all concerned as a personal injury, and the wise Master will bear in mind that he has to come in for abuse enough in the ordinary way without inviting more by cheeseparing.

For this reason, if for no other, I would counsel all young Masters in embryo that if they do not see their way to doing the thing well they had far better leave it alone altogether. Otherwise they will find themselves engaged in a weary struggle to keep up appearances, and I can assure them that there is quite trouble enough in the management of a pack without this one. Shabby gentility is distressing in every walk of life: in the Master of Hounds it is fatal.

Going to the other extreme, we sometimes see a rich young man mounting his men on expensive horses not suited to the country, with the result that big Leicestershire horses are compelled to attempt the impossible, to creep about under trees or crawl up and down rotten banks, which is what a huntsman's horse has to do all day long in a banking country. A big woodland with sticky rides will soon pull the big horses to pieces, and the hills are far more demoralising to them than a far longer run over a stiff vale.

For an ordinary provincial hunt, horses from 15.2 to 15.3, or thereabouts, are quite big enough to carry the huntsman, who is usually a light weight. These horses, which must be well bred, quick and active, may he found all over the south of Ireland, and they generally jump like cats.

It is a question whether there is much difference in the price of horses now or formerly. The sudden demands of a war such as the country has lately gone through will of course temporarily affect prices, but such influences are only transient. Our grandfathers were obliged to put their hands pretty deep in their pockets if they looked for anything out of the common; but on the whole it is probable that the cost of mounting oneself is considerably more nowadays.

Speaking more particularly of the Shires, a Master requires to be exceptionally mounted, for he will have to hold his own with a thrusting crowd, so as to be able to turn round and look his field in the face whenever he wishes them to hold hard and give the hounds room. I never yet saw the field that would stop in obedience to a Master shouting from behind, and, when one comes to think of it, this is only human nature. The worst motives are attributed to the poor Master anxious only to show the best sport. "Nasty jealous beggar!" is an average comment, "only wants us to take a pull so that he may get up to us." Such is the notice commonly taken of a ruler who is behind.

Once, however, let the Master get his head in front and turn round to give his orders, and these are at once respected. To do this whenever occasion demands, he will need to have three or four hundred guineas' worth of horseflesh at his disposal. The exact number of horses required by him must, as in the case also of the huntsman, necessarily depend in great measure on the nature of the country over which he presides. From six to ten horses should be ample for his own

needs, but it must be borne in mind that he generally has further to go than any one else in the hunt. The kennels, it is true, may be well in the centre of the country, but it is by no means likely that the Master's own house will be as conveniently situated.

Apart from the purchase of horses, as to which it is impossible to give estimates suited to every income and taste, the general expenses attaching to the upkeep of stables and kennels must be much what they were half a century ago.

I now propose laying my old book of stable and kennel expenses under tribute, for such actual entries are, after all, more valuable to the reader than any amount of generalisation. Taking the various items as they appear in the list, we have first

Wages.—The wages of a huntsman will vary according to the country. A huntsman of one of the crack packs will get nearly £200 a year besides tips, which may in a fashionable country amount to a very considerable sum. The ordinary huntsman of a less fashionable pack gets from £120 to £140, while the tips which he receives would also stop short at a more modest total.

The first whipper in gets from £70 to £90 a year, and the second gets from £60 to £75. The feeder receives a guinea or perhaps twenty-two shillings a week, while the under-feeder, usually a boy, gets fifteen or sixteen shillings a week, according to his age and qualifications.

The above must be taken as only an approximate wage scale, for the figures will be found to vary some-

what according to locality, yet I do not think that there will be any marked departure from these sums.

All these servants get their cottage, or part of a cottage, as well as coals. Such at least was the practice in my time, and I also gave them presents of meat at Christmas according to the number they had to feed at home.

Stable wages are another matter altogether. There must in the first place be no economy in the matter of a good stud groom, for that official should be of the best procurable, with a smattering or more of veterinary science, sufficient at any rate to keep the more expensive vet. as much as possible out of the stable. The wages of the stud groom vary from 25*s.* to 30*s.* a week with cottage and coals. It is his business to detail the different horses for the day's hunting. It is his business to know which horses are fit and which, on the other hand, require a rest. If this be left to the huntsman, that gentleman will not scruple about picking his favourite horses for certain meets, irrespective of their fitness at the moment. The groom must know how to mount the men properly in the various kinds of country that they may have to hunt, and at the same time to see that the animals are ridden fairly, and to get rid of any that are not up to the country in which they are intended to work. It is no uncommon experience to find the huntsman and stud groom at daggers drawn, and I am not sure indeed that such diversity of opinion is not the best thing for the Master, who thereby has both of them in check and knows what is going on in either depart-

ment. I do not wish to be understood by this admission as advocating a perpetual quarrel; but it is all the better if the huntsman is not always poking his nose into the stable, while the other man should no more dream of going to the kennels than he would of walking into his master's drawing-room.

The huntsman's second horseman gets about £1 a week. The wages of the ordinary helper, which are subject to considerable variation in different districts, usually amount to three or four shillings less. Ours got 16*s.* a week with lodging, which included a large room fitted up as a dormitory. A woman was hired by the day to look after this and to do their washing; and they had a capital mess-room below, where they cooked for themselves.

The more horses are kept, the more helpers will of course be found necessary, but as there is little or no harness work and no washing of traps, each man can look after more horses than in an ordinary stable. Moreover, once they have sent out the horses required for the day, they have time to look after those that stay behind. On the whole, and not counting the head man, we found that a proportion of six men to fourteen horses worked out satisfactorily.

It is considered an honour in most districts to belong to the Hunt establishment. There is no need for the men to look smart or to know how to drive as long as they can strap a horse well, behave themselves, and do as they are bid. I have known men stay on for years in the Hunt stables under succeeding generations of Masters and stud grooms.

The next item in the list, which may be briefly dismissed, is

Shoeing.—A horse will cost for his shoes alone £3 a year. As, however, there is almost always some blacksmith's work or other in either kennels or stables, that individual's yearly bill may, with some margin, be put down as £50 or £60.

The next consideration is

Straw.—Some Masters there are who contract for their straw, by which is meant that they get it for so much per annum, 28*s.* to 34*s.* the ton, giving back the manure. The straw contractor grumbles at straw from the kennels, for it not only has no manure in it, but is useless to put under cattle, being, indeed, worn-out stuff from the hounds' beds and so short that it cannot be picked up or carted about. This, however, is the cheapest and most economical way of disposing of the straw, unless of course there is a farm, attached to the kennels, on which the manure could be used. The yearly consumption of straw should not exceed sixty or seventy tons.

Hay.—A Hunt stable resembles a racing stable in the small consumption of hay. The less hay, in fact, given to horses so continually worked, they better they will do what is required of them. When given in quantity, chaff is the best form, though there are, of course, times when, as the saying goes, a horse has to "fill his belly." Anyhow, no horse should eat much more than a ton a year. That is, roughly, the allowance. With the single exception of oatmeal, hay varies in price more than any other commodity with the purchase

of which the Master of Hounds has to concern himself. During the last two seasons the price in our country has been as high as £5 and £6 a ton, but in other years, when it has been really cheap, 50s. has been nearer the mark. The proper way for the Master to buy his hay is by the rick, getting it from some farmer who cuts good park or meadow hay. I think this infinitely better than clover; and it goes without saying that the better the pasture is done, the better the hay will be. The next item in the book, which is more costly, is

Oats.—Here we have a more important factor in the stable bill. Masters may be emphatically cautioned against buying new oats. They should, if needs be, pay a few shillings more for a good oat that has been well harvested. Moreover, it is imperative that, in the interests of British agriculture, the industry with which, above all others, the sport of hunting is bound up, the Master should always buy home oats, if possible grown in his own hunting country. I know nothing that annoys farmers more than seeing the Master of the local pack buy his forage out of the country. Seeing, indeed, that in many districts hunting is carried on only by sufferance, it should, I venture to say, be unwritten law for hunting men to buy in the neighbourhood or as near at hand as they can. There are, of course, difficulties to take into consideration. It would be quite impossible to buy oats and straw enough in the Shires for the requirements of the numerous great establishments. This in fact constitutes one of the grounds for grumbling on the part of

the farmers of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, that they reap so little benefit from the immense amount of hunting carried on almost daily throughout the season over their lands. Although, however, it may stand to reason that oats cannot be raised in a grass field, hunting men should never miss the opportunity of buying from the farmer whose fences they break and whose lands they ride over.

Price of Oats.—The price of oats varies with the seasons, and naturally old oats are dearer than new.

The best plan is to make up your mind to lay in your stock of corn in August, for you will then be certain you are buying the oats of last year, as the new will hardly be off the ground, much less thrashed.

In a fair, ordinary year you should be able to buy oats, in an oat country, at a sovereign or a guinea a quarter, perhaps a shilling or two more ; but it must be distinctly understood that this means buying direct from the farmer and employing no middleman.

You would find that a corn-dealer would charge you from eight-and-twenty to thirty shillings for old oats, as he, of course, has to make his profit and live.

Always buy, if possible, direct from the farmer, and mind to do the business yourself instead of leaving it to your huntsman or groom. The closer the Master is in touch with the farmer, the better it will be for the Hunt. Your oats should never weigh less than 40 lbs. a bushel, and as much over that as you can get them.

A hunt horse in full work should eat nearly two bushels of oats a week. He will not require so much all the year round, as in summer he will be either

thrown up, or turned out, but from the time when the horse is first taken up, and has begun to be conditioned, to the end of the hunting season, will have been about nine months, and he will have eaten about eighteen or twenty sacks.

It does not seem much, but it is the principal diet of the horse, and it comes very hard on him if his diet is not the best procurable. For practical purposes, and on economic principles, it is found best to buy about fifty or sixty quarters at a time, a quarter being two sacks.

Meal.—In meal we have what is the greatest item of expenditure in the kennel, for meal varies in price to the same extent as hay, ranging from £13 to £18 per ton. As it may be taken that, on an average, each hound consumes rather less than a quarter of a ton of meal, or rather more than £3 worth in a year, the annual bill for meal alone will, in a kennel of, say, fifty couples of hounds, amount to £320 or £330 in the season. It is important to get meal in advance, so as, if possible, to have a year's rations in hand. Never did sporting character in fact or fiction speak truer word than when Mr. Jorrocks told the mad doctor, "Always have a year's meal in hand. Old goes half as far again as new."

Coal.—Although the coal bill for kennels and stables is not a very heavy item, I find that my own average consumption was about a hundred tons a year. The cost of coal is too familiar to need specifying, and it varies, of course, with the distance from the nearest coal centre.

From a photograph by Mrs. Ricardo

SIRES OF THE PACK

From a photograph by Mrs. Ricardo

THE CRAVEN PACK

PLATE V

Bran, Linseed and Beans.—These small items come collectively to about £25 or £30 a year.

Saddlery and Horse Clothing.—It must be remembered that everything has to be bought new when starting an establishment. All that is then required is subsequent replenishing and adding. Every horse must, however, be started with a perfectly new suit, a night rug to save wear and tear in winter, and summer sheets for the warmer weather. Roughly speaking, new horse clothing costs about £3 a suit. The night rugs cost about 25s., the summer suits, with their rollers and hoods, come to about another £2 2s. Each horse must have a hood, which will save many a chill in the cold, inclement weather in which at times it has to be exercised.

It will thus be seen that the clothing of each animal amounts to, roughly, £6 7s.

Capital kennel saddles can be got for £3 apiece, while double bridles cost, new, about 30s., and the various odds and ends connected with the stable will come to quite 30s. more per horse. These articles last a long time. It is simply astonishing how long a good saddle will last; and the bridles can always be remounted when they begin to show signs of wear and tear.

Whips, Spurs, Horns, &c.—These articles appear separately in my book of expenses, so they may likewise be kept to themselves in this place. It is astonishing how such apparently insignificant items mount up in the grand total, but it must be borne in mind that the huntsman has to have at any rate two horns,

while even three will not be found excessive. Accidents soon happen, and nothing is easier than for a horn to be flattened by a horse falling and rolling over it. The Master also wants a couple. Here, then, are four or five horns at about £1 1*s.* each. Each Hunt servant requires two pairs of spurs and a couple of whips, besides a quantity of salmon-tinted cord for lashes and a stock of spare spur leathers. This item at present under consideration may be fixed at something like £20 a year.

Clothes and Boots.—These, of course, are an important item. My clothing bill for three Hunt servants and two second horsemen used to come to just under £100 each season. The men always looked neat and well-dressed, but the thing could be done in more expensive style if the Master's taste ran that way. The Hunt staff requires an entire change of clothing, even for a country that is hunted only three days a week. It must in fairness be remembered that the servants have not the hot-air rooms and other appliances of the gentlemen who hunt, and that is why the complete change is indispensable. Each man, then, must have two new scarlet coats and about three pairs of cord breeches every season. One cap a year could be made to do, but two are better; and of boots each should have two pairs. The cub-hunting season is the most trying time for clothing, and the men can then fall back on old coats purple with age, for not even disciplinarians care much what sort of coat the huntsman wears at five in the morning. Warm Irish woollen gloves are always an acceptable present

for Hunt servants, and I never forget this at Christmas time. In unusually wet weather, too, mackintoshes are useful to keep the uniforms dry going to cover, but I find them, as a rule, unhealthy garments and very apt to give their wearers cold.

Flesh Account.—A certain amount of horseflesh and cowflesh must of necessity be consumed in every kennel, but this diet should be limited as much as possible in summer time. The hounds do not want much flesh in hot weather. Too much of it makes them what the men call "humoury." Naturally, the slaughterer who provides the flesh endeavours to sell as much as possible, but it is useless to have a lot of it hanging up and going bad. Personally, I always had a strong preference for the alternative of purchasing the animals alive, letting them graze and fatten in summer, and killing them as required.

I always gave my huntsman strict orders that the flesh bill was to be kept within £5 a month, and this limit was rarely exceeded. Such economy entailed not unexpected disagreement with the purveyor, that person intimating that if we declined to take what he brought, we might be left when we wanted fresh supplies. A little firmness, however, had the desirable result of bringing him to his bearings. He soon discovered that he could not dispose of his wares so advantageously anywhere else in the neighbourhood, so he ceased from pressing me beyond my requirements.

And here I want to make a passing comment on a practice for which I have nothing but condemnation.

I allude to the precaution of sending a groom with any favourite horse that is to be shot and insisting on his stopping and seeing the deed performed. This has always seemed to me a needless and impolitic want of faith in the establishment; nor is the reason very clear, for it is hardly likely that an animal in such condition would be either worked or starved. It is surely better to let the animal rest quietly in a good grass paddock. There he will be found when wanted, and there cannot be any cruelty in such a course.

What, however, should be carefully avoided is taking flesh from any one. When an animal has died a natural death, there is no saying what the causes were, and this is a matter in which the Master should take no risks.

Hound puppies dearly like fish biscuits, and as a change of diet I believe them to be most beneficial. These contained just enough fish to give them a relish, and they were always a most welcome change from too much meat. This should at all hazards be avoided. Harder work must, of course, carry with it greater nourishment; but, on the other hand, let it be remembered that when they are idle, either in summer or during a protracted spell of frost, they will be all the better for weak broth.

Taxes and Licences.—We now come to a separate list of expenses, and I have left such items as poultry claims and earth-stopping for later consideration.

As to licences, each hound in the kennel entails a licence of 7*s.* 6*d.* as soon as he is entered and takes his place in the pack. Dogs under six months old, sheep

dogs, or dogs specially employed in guarding cattle or leading blind men, are exempt, but such exemption has no interest for the Master. In former days I believe there was a way of compounding by payment of a fixed sum for the pack, but the licence is now rigorously exacted on each hound, and this brings the total licence on a pack of, say, fifty couples to £37 10s. per annum.

The hound licence, however, is not all, for in addition to this the Master has to take out a licence for all the men employed, for not even the helpers in the stable can by any amount of casuistry be brought under the category of "spade labourers!"

Assuming, then, that there are five men employed in the kennel (*i.e.*, the huntsman, two whippers-in, and two feeders) and perhaps six in the stable, otherwise eleven in all, the Master has to pay in licences £8 5s., or 15s. per man.

This brings the total taxes and licences up to £45 15s.

Travelling and Medicine.—I confess my inability to see the connection between these two necessary items of expenditure, and my only excuse for bracketing them here is that they stand so in my book. Under the head of travelling come all train expenses directly connected with the Hunt establishment. These may have various objects, such, for instance, as sending bitches to distant kennels; the huntsman's journeys to look at hounds, and his expenses if he has to go any considerable distance to help to judge; sending hounds to Peterborough Show; travelling of horses bought and sold, or of draft hounds; in short, all such legitimate travel-

ling expenses connected with the upkeep of the pack. It may even happen at times that the entire pack, with all the men and horses, must be put on a train for a distant meet; and yet more often horses have to be sent on. All this comes under the head of travelling; and I found my own bill for the kennels worked out at about £16 a year.

The medicines required for both kennel and stable were a much heavier item and averaged about £30 a year. This, however, covered all veterinary surgeons' visits and such expenses as were incurred through accidents. I should, in fact, regard this as a minimum, and I must add, with special reference to that pack, that the vet.'s visits were rare, both the huntsman and stud groom knowing a good deal of the work. It is always a feather in the cap of the management when the vet.'s bill is small, and I am sure, from what I know of similar expenses elsewhere, that we had some reason to congratulate ourselves in this respect.

The Huntsman's Petty Account.—This is one of those unavoidable leakages in the Master's accounts which, though not serious, cannot by any means be ignored. It covers a great number of little expenses in themselves quite insignificant, but mounting in the course of the year to a total that it is absolutely necessary to take into account in any examination of the annual outlay, not far short in the pack of which I write of £50 a year. To be more exact, about £4 a month, or £48 during the year, was the figure; and this included all printing done for the establishment, kennel lists, for instance, and cards for the month; besides which there was the

kennel washing and all the upkeep of the men's bedroom and messroom. There are a thousand and one little matters for which the huntsman is more or less directly responsible, and these go down in his petty account.

Repairs and Miscellaneous.—Here, again, as the heading denotes, is a composite source of expense that, however, means a good deal to the Master, particularly after his first year, and when the freshness of things begins to wear off. The tax may be a heavy or light one, according to the terms on which he occupies his kennels. In my own case, I was regarded as an ordinary tenant, and I had to keep the premises in ordinary tenantable repair. It will thus be easily understood that the first year, when everything was new and in good condition, my expenses under this head came to an only nominal sum, such as, if I remember right, the cost of a little whitewashing, disinfecting, or distempering walls, jointly a matter of a few pounds only.

The second year, however, brought a not unexpected increase in this expenditure, for there was a deal of painting to be done. There was also another and a heavier item in the shape of a deep cemented tank, or pit, which I made to bury the offal in. This I regard as so important and so well worth the extra expense that I shall say more of it later.

Repairs mounted in cost year by year, for during the next two or three years I had to replace the stable and kennel doors and to put in a new boiler. For repairs alone, then, I put down an average of £40 a year.

The "Miscellaneous" referred to above includes an immense number of small matters which would aggregate to about £50 a year. The two chief elements of this were the puppy show luncheon to the whole Hunt, costing about £20, and the presents to successful walkers, coming to another £15. The remaining £15 must be assigned to such necessary expenses as postage, stationery and advertising, tips to the huntsmen to whose kennels bitches are sent, beef and other good cheer for the staff at Christmas, and so forth. I have said nothing of the price of draft hounds, for personally I bought only a couple or two during my first year and no more, always preferring to breed my own.

It will thus be clear that the repairs and miscellaneous together amounted in my case to about £90 per annum, and that may be taken as a fair average for a pack of that size.

Of puppy shows, as also of one or two other necessary items of expense, I will speak later, but the foregoing make up the whole ordinary expenditure of a country pack, apart from earth-stopping and poultry claims, which are dealt with on a later page. It may be a convenience to the reader if I tabulate these various expenses, some analysis of which has been attempted in this chapter, and if against this total of £211 0 15s. (to be increased by two other not inconsiderable expenses) we set the usual subscription given to the Master of a provincial pack as £1200 or £1400, it will be seen that I was justified in remarking at the outset that he must take up his burden prepared to dip into his own pocket.

AVERAGE YEARLY EXPENDITURE

	£	s.	d.
1. Wages	600	0	0
2. Shoeing	60	0	0
3. Straw	96	0	0
4. Hay	165	0	0
5. Oats	235	0	0
6. Meal	325	0	0
7. Coal	97	0	0
8. Saddlery, &c.	100	0	0
9. Bran, linseed, &c.	26	0	0
10. Whips, spurs, &c.	20	0	0
11. Clothes, boots, &c.	97	0	0
12. Flesh	60	0	0
13. Poultry Claims (*vide infra*)			
14. Taxes and licences	45	15	0
15. Travelling, &c.	46	0	0
16. Earth-stopping (*vide infra*)			
17. Huntsman's book	48	0	0
18. Repairs and Miscellaneous	90	0	0
	£2110	15	0

It will, of course, happen that the price of forage and hound meal shows some variation in different seasons but if we take the average of, say, six years, we shall find it work out approximately as given above.

Let me advise intending Masters to post a ledger of their expenses accurately, noting all moneys paid out and putting them down at the time, and not from memory. In this way only can they exercise proper control, know exactly how they stand, and, what is more important still, perhaps, see at a glance, when

changing servants, exactly what the outgoing man paid for the things of which he had charge.

The Puppy Show, Walking and Breeding.—However little the Master may like making speeches, it is absolutely necessary that he should hold a puppy show. He may dislike speechifying, but every one else likes it; that is the rub. There is no greater link between the puppy walkers and the Hunt than to see a hound recognise in the man or woman who walked him and brought him up the old friend of a season or two ago. This appeals forcibly to all genuine lovers of the hound, and the beneficial influence of such gatherings is one that the politic Master will not disregard.

I would go even further than this. I always made a point, when hounds were taken to any house where a puppy had been walked, of letting the old dog or bitch go up to the back door of its own accord and renew acquaintance with the cook. The recognition was as often as not mutual; and the cook was flattered to see that the Master appreciated her efforts, while the hound plainly showed the delight it felt in seeing once more, if only for a few minutes, its old quarters. I remember also that the Hunt servants sneered at this as a breach of discipline; but I also remember not caring a jot for their unexpressed opinion on the matter, for it seemed better to give pleasure to several people and one hound than to stand well with my hypercritical servants; and if there is one piece of advice that I would impress most strongly on the young Master, it is that he should do his utmost to please the puppy walkers. I may seem to be straying from the rubric of this chapter,

but after all it brings us back to the necessity of bearing the expense of a puppy show luncheon.

It must be remembered that a puppy does a great deal of mischief and takes a great deal of looking after when out at walk. Next to a monkey, no animal is more mischievous, and the puppy is sure not only to purloin quantities of eatables from the pantry and larder, but also to make playthings of such household articles as dusters, brushes and sponges. I recollect how a puppy that I once walked found its way into the dining-room and there made a clean sweep of the whole table, breaking several glasses, and making a terrible mess of everything. Such pranks not unnaturally occasion the servants great annoyance, and this it is often difficult to make good to them. But if one member of the household more than another ought to be the puppy's firm friend it is the cook. It is she who gives him all his food; it is she who lets him sneak into the kitchen for warmth and comfort on cold, wet days; it is she who nurses him when ailing, and who, indeed, often, by taking it in time, wards off a bad attack of distemper.

I once had a cook perfectly devoted to the puppies, and one of these she actually nursed back to life from a more than usually serious attack of the "yellows." She had a basket placed by the kitchen fender, and in this the little animal lay wrapped in warm flannel. He eventually recovered and took his place in the pack as one of my most trusted entry, yet he must inevitably have died but for the unremitting care of that good woman.

I have walked puppies for a number of years without ever, curiously enough, having won a first prize. Still, as some consolation to a true lover of hunting, I have had five hounds, all of different years, running together in the pack; indeed, such a record is more gratifying than taking any number of prizes and then seeing your dog drafted for some fault or defect.

Apart from the foregoing advantages, the puppy show has another great recommendation as the great summer reunion of the members of the Hunt. Here it is that the ladies have a welcome and rare opportunity of saying polite things to their friends the farmers, over whose land they ride so recklessly in winter time. It affords, in fact, about their only chance of coming in contact with them out of the hunting season. Much importance attaches to the prizes for the best hounds, the first and second for dog-puppies, and the same for the bitches.

It is generally a good plan to give a prize for the best couple, for such an award obviously encourages folks to walk couples instead of single puppies. As a matter of fact, in my opinion at any rate, a couple generally give less trouble than a solitary animal, for the two play with one another and are far less likely to get into mischief. So, at least, I think, though I am quite familiar with the allegation that they are more likely to get hunting in the woods. As against this must be set the certainty that a solitary puppy will inevitably pine for a companion; if a companion is not provided, the puppy sets off in quest of one, and such a search leads it into bad habits.

There is some diversity of opinion as to what class furnish the best "walks." In our part of the country we lean to the tradesmen, for these have facilities not alone for giving the puppies exercise in running each morning after the carts on their rounds, but also for bringing them in contact with fresh people every day and curing them of shyness. The farmer, on the other hand, may be just as good if he will give them sufficient liberty and let them chase the hares. I may differ from some authorities on this point, but I never yet knew a hound to suffer from having chased hares in its younger days. Such fun teaches the animal to be watchful and keen, instead of staring or playing aimlessly. Hounds may also be walked well in a gentleman's house, but they must in this case be made to go out to exercise with the horses each morning, as there is otherwise the serious risk of their getting too little work and growing up in consequence coarse and "throaty."

Oatmeal porridge is the best food for puppies, far better than milk, which is liable to scour them. Moreover, it accustoms them to porridge, which, with the variation of broth, is their diet later in life. A few Spratt's biscuits will also be found beneficial, say one a day to begin with, and then later in greater quantity. A boiled sheep's head may also be given when the puppies grow stronger, but they will be better in quite early days for as little meat as possible. It is the gravest mistake to assume that a young growing animal requires a deal of meat. A few bones now and then, with very little meat on them, are good for the teeth

and keep the youngsters amused. The bones of game or poultry should on no account be used, for these are very apt to splinter and stick in their throats.

It is always a mistake, under any circumstances, to allow a puppy to chase a fowl or any animal of the farmyard. If he kills a fowl, give him a good thrashing at once and tie the dead bird round his neck and leave it there. This is often known to annoy the animal so seriously as to cure him of such habits then and there.

One sometimes sees puppies playing on familiar terms with the house-cat and kittens. This may look very interesting as a "happy family," but personally I should never encourage it unless I knew that the cats were quite accustomed to such companionship. It is notorious that a cat often strikes at the eye, and then, lo and behold, one fine morning you find your swell youngster, by "Belvoir Dexter" out of "Quorn Governess," minus an eye, or with an ear so badly mutilated as almost to spoil his looks for good and all.

If you think the puppy is sickening for distemper, it is best to send at once to the huntsman for some pills, of which he always keeps a good stock. Indeed, I used at one time to send out a couple of boxes with every puppy until I found that they are much better fresh. The patient should be kept as warm as possible in the house—not in a stable or cold out-door kennel —and made, if possible, to swallow something. The trouble usually is that the sufferer refuses everything, and therefore has no reserve of strength when it is most wanted.

The Hound Show at Peterborough is a great sight, and so beneficial to fox-hunting that I should like to see it far more generously subscribed to and attended by hunting-folk than is now the case. Moreover, the hunting-man has something to gain from the visit, for he may there see the most perfect specimens of hound anywhere brought together, and it is good training for his eye to note the ideal of hound form. Not that every good-looking hound which takes a prize at Peterborough is necessarily a good worker in the field, but the majority realise the expectations formed of them.

It was once my good fortune to breed a winner, for the Craven "Vagabond" took the cup in 1894, he and his brother, "Valesman," having won the first prize for unentered hounds in 1893. "Vagabond" was second for the cup in 1895, but was on that occasion beaten by the Oakley "Dandy"; and again in 1896 he was second, being then beaten by Mr. Fernie's "Ringwood." After that he was never shown again.

It is, as I said in an article in *Baily's Magazine* four or five years ago, a great mistake to buy draft hounds, for it is obvious that a draft must be sold for some fault. Of course it happens that some masters are either too nervous of their scant knowledge of the science of breeding, or their servants are too lazy to undertake it single-handed. In either case the standard of excellence of the establishment must go down, for it is practically impossible to maintain the exact character and formation of a pack by buying from different kennels year after year. The only sound

principle is to breed from the best young bitch of the year, putting her to the dog that appears to be most sought after. "Volatile," mother of "Vagabond," won her home cup at the puppy show as the best bitch of her year, so I sent her to the Warwickshire "Hermit," who happened at the time to be exactly her own age. I have always regarded this similarity in years as a point of the greatest moment, for it is and always must be absolute folly mating an old bitch with a vigorous young dog. She will probably carry a good many puppies, but even if, as is extremely improbable, these are all born alive, they are certain to be a weakly lot. Even if such a miracle happened as the birth of a dozen healthy whelps, it is equally certain that the old bitch would not have milk enough to rear a couple, and the strain would in all probability kill her. A far better combination, if there must be disparity in years, is to mate a young bitch and a moderately old dog, for at any rate the female will be in full possession of her powers and may therefore be relied on to bring up any quantity in reason. Wet nurses are, however, an advantage, for it is a known fact that under such conditions the whelps grow up much stronger and healthier.

No other animal of such value is perhaps bred as cheaply as the foxhound. In nearly every sporting breed, say pointers, setters, retrievers, or indeed in the case of borzois or deerhounds for the show bench, the services of the sire alone cost a good round sum, while the production of the foxhound puppy, usually one of a large litter, has only cost a sovereign

From a photograph by Mrs. Ricardo

CRAVEN KENNELS

From a photograph by Mrs. Ricardo

HUNTSMEN, WHIP, AND TWO FEEDERS OF THE CRAVEN

PLATE VI

or two in addition to the railway journey of his mother when she went to be mated. The judicious Master will never grudge the absence of one or two of the best bitches in the pack during the breeding season. Any hound can help catch a fox on a good scenting day. If it is a bad scenting fortnight, so much the better. The best plan, of course, is to get the bitches away in frosty weather, or when it looks as if a good spell of snow had set in. They will all be back again, as likely as not, with the next open weather. Personally, I have no faith in very early puppies. May is quite early enough for them to be born, for they will thrive better in the warm summer weather when it is generally possible for them to get out. There can be no earthly object in sending the bitches away to be warded in November, for they would then have to run all the risks. As a bitch generally goes about sixty days in whelp, there should be no great difficulty in making a rough calculation, particularly as the time is very rarely in excess of seventy days. November is just the month in which the Master requires as much steadiness as possible in the pack. It is the first month of regular hunting, and the hunters of two and three seasons are very necessary to give drive to the rest.

Apart from the aforementioned advantage of approximate age, it is very desirable that the sire and dam should as far as possible share the same characters. The result of putting a small, compact dog to a big, leggy bitch is almost bound to be disappointing, for the produce are sure to inherit the bad points of their

mother, but not the good of their father. A constant change of Masters is one of the most serious causes of unevenness in a pack. This is easily understood, for every succeeding Master has preference for a different type of dog, hence the discrepancies.

Poultry Claims.—The question of poultry claims and funds is so vast that it will, in this chapter on the Master's expenditure, be only possible to touch briefly on the working methods of one or two hunts. In the old days, as has already been said, a little tact on the part of the Master made a personal matter of the poultry claim and one easily adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties. Now, however, it has assumed alarming proportions, and I believe I am within the mark if I say that in some of the fashionable hunts £500 or £600 a year would hardly cover it, for it is a lamentable fact that every animal which gets stolen from a farm in the hunting country is put down to the scapegoat fox. There is even a tradition in the Badminton country of vegetables having on one occasion been included in the claim, the account reading thus :—

		£	s.	d.
To 1 bull calf		2	2	0
3 sheep		1	15	0
1 litter of pigs		2	5	0
All the poultry	say	10	0	0
10 acres of vetches		5	0	0
Total		21	2	0

When the unhappy Master came to the item of ten acres of vetches, his temper proved unequal to the

occasion, and history does not say whether the account was ever paid in full.

To avoid such impostures, it should be clearly understood throughout the length and breadth of the country what should be paid for and what overlooked. If there is any reasonable proof that an attempt, albeit feeble, has been made to shut the fowls in, and that the offending fox has scratched in under the door, such a claim should, particularly if the claimant is poor and makes a living out of the poultry, be paid at once and without demur. I never countenanced paying a gentleman's servants. In the first place, the poultry belongs in all probability to the Master, who would hardly want to be paid at all; secondly, in the case of a keeper, he would be sure to lay all possible blame on the fox, and charge the Hunt with the price of a few old broody hens. That it is annoying in the extreme to lose fowls, particularly if they are valuable, hardly admits of denial; but those who keep prize poultry should take the trouble to shut the birds out of harm's way.

Wire.—A still greater difficulty of the modern Master is the question of barbed wire. That device seems nowadays to grow in countries which we all remember quite free from it. The secretary of the wire fund in the big flying countries is generally a man of great energy, and has at his beck and call an army of labourers ready at all times to go to any part of the country and pull down the wire, carefully coiling it and stacking it somewhere handy, so that they can put their hands on it again at the end of the season and put it up again. This, if done systematically and well,

answers capitally, but it is costly work, and few ordinary countries could afford the expense. It is a sad reflection that the whole trouble of wire could be removed if only the landlords were a little better off. They have only to give timber to their tenants, and the wire would disappear as if by magic. No decent farmer can find any pleasure in putting up such death-traps, but he must mend his fences and keep his stock in somehow, and if he has no rails he must obviously use wire. Moreover, in an age in which, thanks to our "free" trade, the growing of corn is no longer a profitable investment, the farmer has to keep more stock and requires correspondingly more fence than he did of old. On the Berkshire and Wiltshire downs, in my part of the country, the farmers, instead of keeping only sheep, which can be herded all day by one boy and a good sheep-dog, cover their lands with cattle. These require fencing in, so that where we once had miles on miles of good sound down-land, stretching half over the length and breadth of two counties, is now a veritable birdcage of wire fencing, so badly gated that if hounds go fast it is exceedingly difficult to keep near them. Mercifully, there is hardly any barbed wire in all these miles of fencing, else hunting would soon have to be abandoned, as hounds would be cut to ribbons. Still, there is quite enough even there, and it is on the increase.

The most hideous, but too familiar form of mending is to stretch a couple of strands of barbed wire across a gap. This is an almost certain source of disaster, whether to the child out on his pony or the old Squire,

once a hard enough rider, but now bound to look for the gaps that once he sneered at, not to mention the brigade of regular "gap-riders." I think I would defy the hardest man in England to go straight knowing that there is wire about, for, apart from the worst of falls that it gives the rider, the poor horse, who is doing his best, is caught suddenly by this hideous horror and gets terribly cut. One of the most gallant of pioneers over the Northamptonshire pastures, Captain Pennell-Elmhirst, killed one of the best mares and most faithful friends he ever had over a little cock fence that he had been over scores of times before, close to a farm. Suddenly, and without warning, wire had been run through it, and disaster followed swiftly. Those who witnessed the catastrophe will never forget the agony of the poor brute and the dreadful sight that it presented in its trouble, and it would probably have gone hard with the wretched individual who had the wire put up if he could have been found. Every man who puts up wire should have painted boards with coloured posts to indicate its exact whereabouts and precise extent. If it goes round the field, he should have a clear place ten or twenty yards in width, flagged out like an ordinary steeplechase jump for entrance into the field and a second for exit. These spots might be clearly indicated by red posts, and these particular portions of the fence should on no account be mended with wire. It would not be long before the followers of the Hunt got to know the whereabouts of these safe places, and the chance of fatalities would be very much lessened.

It is, of course, the landlord who must be consulted

first and foremost, but my own opinion, which I offer for what it is worth, is that a wire fund is neither more nor less than a premium on putting up wire! Even rabbit-netting round a covert will give the huntsman a nasty fall if he is not looking where his horse is going to. I recollect myself getting, on one occasion, what is politely termed in hunting language a "regular smeller" in this way, for my horse did not see the netting, but jumped off a bank and caught his fore feet in it. Down I went, with my face in a ploughed field, and the sensation was as if I was never coming to a standstill.

Australian, Canadian, and American horses are all taught to jump wire, by the way; and if this curse gets much more prevalent in the old country, our own horses will have to undergo a course of similar instruction. It should not, however, be forgotten that any sensible horse will of his own accord step over wire if he can only see it.

Earth-stopping, Finds, Litters.—Old engravings show a picturesque but extinct type, the old earth-stopper, generally with an old shaggy pony, a terrier, and a lantern. It was his business to retire the night before the hunt to any part of the country, no matter how great the distance, and to see to the stopping out of foxes in the locality that was to be hunted the following day. He did his work very well, far better, indeed, than is done nowadays, for he knew every earth in the country, and always stopped at just the proper time. Very few keepers do that, but stop too early or not at all, often making no effort to do so until five or six on

the morning of the meet. This is the worst plan of all, worse, indeed, than inaction, since it generally has the result of stopping the foxes in. The right hour for the work is between half-past ten in the evening and midnight. The old-time earth-stopper was always at his work between these hours, no matter how rough or cold the weather. It was his occupation at the moment, and it would no more have occurred to him to neglect it than to go without his supper. These were the days in which the countries got properly stopped, since the old man knew the whereabouts of every litter and did his work well and thoroughly. In the new order of things, worse luck, no keeper allows intruders in his covert. He or his underlings make a pretence of stopping up the main earth. In nine cases out of ten the procedure is a mere farce, for the men take no notice of the three or four large rabbit earths, which, though they never breed there, the foxes habitually use, preferring them, indeed, to the main earth in cases of sudden danger. Then, as already observed, they are not particular as to the hour. If they begin too early in the evening, the fox is not yet out; if they leave it till next morning, it has gone home again; in either case, it is stopped in, not out.

It is a good plan, indeed, one of the best under modern conditions, to have the earths stopped permanently at the beginning of the season. For this purpose it is best to use a good substantial bundle of faggots—"bavins" they are called in some parts—and to stuff up the main earth with this until February, when it should be removed in order that the vixen may

go in and lie up. It should be borne in mind that the hour for stopping-out is not the same in February or March as in the earlier part of the season; it should not be done at night. The proper plan is just to "put-to," as it is called, in the morning, always leaving the main earth open after February 10. Any Master coming to a new country and finding that the stopping-out is badly done will do well to have these and other necessary maxims neatly printed on cards. Half a dozen of these may then be sent round to the neighbouring keepers for distribution among their satellites. Coming to the actual system of payments for stopping as prescribed in the different Hunts some variation is found. In the Craven country we pay by the acreage of the estate. Thus, a keeper on a large place may get £10, while on a smaller place he would get only £5. Some of the quite small estates would run to no more than a couple of guineas apiece, and below even these, on a regular descending scale, there are numbers of very small people, with perhaps one earth to look after, who get just their 5s. and their earth-stopping dinner once a year.

The payment for litters is, of course, a good plan if properly worked, but there must be an understanding, or even a stipulation, that these are seen at regular hunting-time. Any fool of a keeper can have a litter or so to show the Master at the period of cub-hunting; that once over, they are seen no more. Such as these are not the litters that a Master wishes to encourage.

As to payment for finds, I personally never did, and never in any circumstances would, encourage it. Some

Masters, I am aware, favour it very strongly, holding that it encourages the keeper always to show a fox. The system has always seemed to me to work unfairly for the small people, and this is, I think, easily explained. There will always be such small holdings, with perhaps one or two coverts that face north or are otherwise unfavourable. Although, however, these may hardly ever hold a fox when drawn, it is quite possible, if not indeed probable, that a litter was bred in the little place. The foxes would always frequent the bigger covert with its game and shelter, and thus it comes about that hounds find in the big covert, and the keeper, though none too friendly, pockets the "find" money. This is obviously unfair, for the poor "little man," though he had all the bother of the litter, nursing it as well as lay in his power to do, reaps no benefit, as hounds invariably find in his richer neighbour's wood. I must frankly admit that our own plan of paying by acreage is likewise open to the criticism that there may be a good deal more earth-stopping on a small property than on a larger one, particularly in the way of rabbit holes in banks, odd, out-of-the-way drains, old culverts, and such places of the kind as need special attention whenever hounds come into the neighbourhood. Moreover, it may easily happen that the small place lies in a district which is, from its convenient position or sporting character, visited on an average once a fortnight throughout the season, whereas hounds might not draw the coverts on the bigger estate once in six weeks. There should always be a dinner with the Master present, and never otherwise,

for it is here that he can meet them together and give them his views. He should also take notes of the exact whereabouts of the litters and not depend on hearsay. Payments are usually made as soon after nine in the morning as possible, so that each man can be asked, as he enters the room, whether he has a litter or not; where it is if he has one; and any other information of use. The huntsman should be present also, as not only is he able to recall often important incidents that happened in the same locality in other seasons, but he would be a valuable witness in the case of any dispute arising over finds or getting to ground. The earth-stoppers should be warned that they are given this money for a specific purpose, namely, to stop the earths, and that if they neglect this duty they run the risk of getting nothing at all the next season. Above all, however, let the Master see to it that the proceedings are as friendly as possible. The plan of bullying the stoppers is a foregone failure; it is far more polite to endeavour to meet them half-way. One thing is essential, and that is that they should be made clearly to understand, if possible by their own masters, that the Hunt gratuities are a purely voluntary levy, and that stopping is as much a part of their duty as, say, feeding their pheasants. It may safely be said, without fear of contradiction, that the duties of the Secretary, or of whomever looks after the earth-stopping, would be a great deal less onerous if only all estate owners would impress this on keepers when engaging them.

The stopping money paid by the Craven Hunt amounts to some £150, covering payments to about

one hundred and twenty keepers and men, and, as the dinner costs perhaps another £30, this matter of stopping-out represents a respectable item in the year's expenditure. Some owners of coverts prefer to pay their own men themselves, and from the Hunt they get only a modest five shillings and a ticket for the dinner, and it must be admitted that if this were the general practice, stopping-out would come considerably cheaper than it now is.

Capping.—To some folks the practice of capping must always look like handing round the hat after a street performance, and within certain limits it may perhaps be said that if it is possible in any other way to ensure those who get the fun contributing in just proportion to the expense, capping may with advantage be avoided. But such an alternative is not always feasible. It must stand to reason that in the large flying countries, where horsemen are reckoned by the hundred, a number of strangers hunt daily with the different packs, and a vast proportion of these are only birds of passage, changing their hunting grounds from week to week. As such sportsmen, ay, and sportswomen, are here to-day and gone to-morrow, it was to catch them that the practice of capping was in the first instance devised. It must unfortunately be insisted, as a matter of ordinary experience, that, but for some such tax on the spot, these gentry would never dream of giving anything at all to hounds, their idea being apparently that the pack is maintained solely for the pleasure of showing sport to any one so minded. In taxing those who follow hounds, it is always important

to exempt such classes as contribute otherwise to the sport, such, for instance, as the chief landowners, the farmers, and the regular subscribers to the Hunt. There are some who think that the tradesman should also be immune. I confess that the logic of this view is not clear to me, for unless he subscribes I do not see why he should get his hunting free any more than other people.

Capping fills its proper place in the shires, and there, besides levying a small direct tax on those who hunt, it has the further beneficial effect of in some way lessening the immense crowds that nowadays come out with the fashionable packs. In the provinces it is out of place. There, every one who hunts is either a farmer or a subscriber. There are very few horse-breakers and no horse-dealers out with the ordinary quiet packs, and the meets of a purely sporting pack over a bad-scenting, non-jumping country hold out no attraction to wealthy, hard-riding young men. Moreover, if any stranger should come down for a week or fortnight and take a fancy to a few days' hunting, the eagle eye of the Secretary is sure to spot him the second or third day he is out. When asked such a casual visitor is almost certain to respond to the appeal with a small but adequate subscription. Another help in the small countries is the almost invariable presence of one or two very large subscribers, who, whether they hunt or not, give their £100 or their £150 to the county pack.

Then there is the case of the ordinary man with a couple of horses or even three. He, as a rule, gives his

£20 or £25. If he had to pay each time he hunted, he would not in the course of the season contribute as much, at any rate, as the latter sum. Even if he hunted three days a week, he would not, even making no allowance for interruptions by snow or frost, be out more than fifty times in the whole season. The provincial pack does not benefit by strangers, for no man would deliberately choose a plough or hilly country to hunt in when he can have his pick of the grass countries. Nor is it likely that the soldier home on long leave will immure himself in some dull hole, with far from first-rate hunting, just because his ancestral home is there. No; he will doubtless run down with a single horse to spend Christmas in the bosom of his family (having previously taken care to be there when the home coverts were shot), after which, with a clear conscience, off he goes to some hard-riding pack, where he can get more fun for his money and better test the powers of his new horses. Such a one is useless to the poor Secretary or Treasurer on the look out for a good sum by capping. Provincial packs, then, are useless for this system of taxation, but let the Secretary by all means coax all the money he can out of the enormous fields that hunt at the present day with the popular packs.

Subscriptions, and, incidentally, of Ladies.—The first duty of every right-thinking man who settles down in the country with the intention of hunting as much as he can is to give what he can afford to the local pack. The sums given and expected vary in the different hunting countries, but I think I am not far wrong if I

suggest fifteen guineas per horse. No doubt, if he has four, the Hunt will be quite satisfied with a subscription of fifty for the season, but anything much below this cannot be regarded as generous or even adequate. There are plenty who give their ten or fifteen guineas for the season, with, say, a couple of animals, and there are others who give maybe what they consider enough for themselves, while they overlook the possibility, not to say probability, of a wife, a stray daughter or two, or a son, all coming out of the same subscription.

I have now to touch on a somewhat delicate subject. It used, in the good old days, to be a maxim that it was not right to ask a lady for a subscription. In a big field of to-day, however, there are often more women than men, and it is useless to deny that they do about three times the damage. The ordinary hunting-woman would no more dream of riding up a furrow to save the rest of the field than she would dream of flying, and she will revel in a gallop over a turnip-field, ignoring the fact that a turnip dies at every stride of her horse. She rarely knows seeds from old grass land, and if she did I fear I am not convinced that she would turn her mount a hair's breadth out of the way. On the whole, then, and taking my risk of being voted ungallant, I would not, had I a free hand, allow any woman to come out with my pack unless she had subscribed as much as any man, if not, indeed, more.

The Hunt subscription is usually guaranteed to the Master by a few gentlemen of the Hunt. They are rarely called upon to discharge the liability, but the

Master has, at any rate, the satisfaction of knowing himself protected against heavy loss. In some Hunts, indeed, it is the custom to give the Master his half-yearly subscription in advance, and this is certainly a great convenience, as the money is just as safe in the bank, and the Master is thereby saved the necessity of drawing on his private account. I have always strongly favoured the keeping separate of the Hunt account.

Concluding Hints.—I have already laid stress on the advantages of entering every item of expenditure in a large ledger, with the pages numbered and marked for reference. Only with such regular book-keeping can the Master hope to see at a glance how everything is going on, whether either the huntsman or stud-groom is extravagant, how the price of corn and other provender is fluctuating, and other such matters of financial interest as I have been called upon to estimate in this chapter. Only by reference to such a ledger have I been able to accept the editor's invitation. It must be admitted that such cut-and-dried business habits commend themselves very little to most Hunt establishments, in which there is, as a rule, about as much business method as there is in a Government office.

The quantity of waste that goes on in all large stables and kennels might easily be checked if it were only done in the proper way and at the proper moment. It is the worst policy to economise in the quality of the animals' food, for the best is, in the long run, also the cheapest. I do not mean this policy of large-handedness to extend to every department. There is, for instance, nothing to gain by giving a guinea a-piece for

whips when the same article may be purchased at a less fashionable mart for 12*s.* 6*d.* or 15*s.* In horse clothing, however, as in food, the cheapest is not always the most economical, and there was a Kendal firm—I hesitate to name it more specifically lest I should be accused of advertising it—where I used to get practically everlasting clothing at prices that compared very favourably with those of the London dealers. Clothes should also be got from the best man available, for surely nothing looks more distressing than to see an establishment of otherwise smart servants with badly-cut clothes. It is as easy to have the clothes cut well, and the same applies in even greater measure to the men's boots.

It is in the stables that I always think greater economy might be prescribed, not so much in the actual cost of the food as in the manner in which it is used. A really economical stud groom is a crown of joy, and let me advise the Master who has once found such a jewel to keep him, unless he has very strong reasons indeed for parting with him. A saving of perhaps a hundred a year will surely cover a few faults. The fault that will most likely need overlooking is the temper, for it is notorious that stud-grooms have as quick tempers as good cooks. The Master who finds most of the other members of the establishment grumble that they can't get on with Mr. Snaffles, may hug himself in the conviction that he has a good man who will not connive at petty larcenies. The tradesmen are excellent judges of the peculiarities of Hunt servants. If one thing used to annoy me

when I was a Master, more than another, it was the discovery that my servants took a percentage from the tradesmen on all goods supplied. This is a wretched practice, as, of course, the tax eventually falls on the Master, since the tradesman is not going to lose anything by it. I recollect one of the tradesmen asking to see me, and then asking whether I knew if my groom had threatened to go elsewhere if he did not get a certain commission. I told him that if he were fool enough to pay the groom anything he had only himself to blame, for I and not the groom was master in that stable. There, if I remember rightly, this unpleasant matter ended, for the groom had done me no harm personally, and it was not my business to speak to him on the subject. But I have quoted this as an instance of what may go on behind the Master's back, and how simply he can, if he will only take the trouble, remedy such little troubles without friction.

One evil, however, I was always powerless to remedy, and that was the huntsman getting his meal from one particular dealer. That there were all manner of private understandings in this fidelity I well knew, but as sure as ever I attempted to change my custom to a rival man, I was gravely assured that the hounds were all wrong and that the new meal was disagreeing with them. As the huntsman is regarded as the guiding authority in the kennels, else he would not be kept, I had to go back to the man who, no doubt, had tipped him more generously than his competitors in business.

There are other ways in which the young Master

may be blackmailed by those in his employ, but this matter of secret commissions is, perhaps, the most flagrant instance. I never raise any objection to people giving my servants presents if they wish to recognise their good offices in that way, but I do most strongly demur to paying more for an article simply because my own men levy a toll on it. The whole system is a rotten one. There are, I know, men who never think of buying a horse without giving the groom a sovereign, the man they buy it of often giving a like amount to their man. How absurd this is! If the man had been of any real service in drawing your attention to the bargain there might be some sense in it. As it stands, you might just as well tip the man behind the counter half a crown every time you go to to your hatter's for a new hat!

Here, then, I must conclude this sowewhat lengthy chapter on the Master's expenses. If I have seemed a little careful as to detail, I would plead that I do not write without some six seasons of experience, and also that the question of finance is one that in a measure calls for detail. Let me in conclusion warn the aspiring M.F.H. that no man can nowadays hope to hunt a pack of hounds free of cost to himself. It takes a very good subscription list indeed to let him off scot free.

Then, again, the worry and bother are almost indescribable. He is Master in name, and in the field let us hope in something more than name; but no man, more particularly in a good shooting country, is more

every one's servant. If he is to bear with equanimity all the petty annoyances that strew his path from day to day through the season, he will want the patience of an angel and the tact of a Colonial Minister. If he should endeavour to take a high and mighty view of his position, he will come to sad grief. When, for instance, the owner of the shooting forbids him his coverts, forbidden they are, and he has absolutely no remedy. If he has not country enough to hunt in November, the month in which shooting-people are at their worst, why, then he must stay at home. I can well remember more than once being absolutely at my wits' end to provide a day's sport in my country at the time I write of, and perhaps after all I could only arrange a desultory day on the bleak Downs.

CHAPTER V

CRITICISMS OF HIS FOLLOWERS

Modern subscription packs—Hunt clubs—The Master's duties and liabilities—Keeping the field in order—Alleged extravagance — Pageantry of the hunting-field — The crowd—The perfect Master of Hounds—Men who have approached the ideal—Complaints against the crowd—"Marmaduke" on "rebellious subjects"—Local scribes—Lord Lonsdale's plan of helping the farmers—Supporting local newspapers—Second horsemen—"The Druid"—Nimrod—Surtees and hunting correspondents—The Master and the entry—Famous kennel huntsmen as judges of hounds—Masters who hunt their own hounds—Mr. Rawdon Lee on the modern foxhound—Ladies walking puppies—Other views on puppy-walking—"Scrutator"—Mr. Otho Paget

THE Master of Hounds is the sporting Prime Minister of the country which he hunts. In most hunting countries, his social position is second only to that of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. In the hunting-field he is an absolute autocrat, subject only to the wishes of the covert owners. So long as he is in authority we are bound to obey him. In the case of a subscription pack, we can depose him, or request him to resign, if we are discontented with his methods of providing us with the sport for which we have subscribed. We must, however, exercise extreme caution

when we deliver a verdict upon the season of our discontent. Since the abolition of the Royal Buckhounds, there is not a pack of hounds in the United Kingdom, which is not supported, if not openly, in some small degree, by subscriptions. In 1874 there were only eleven non-subscription packs of foxhounds out of the one hundred and thirty-seven packs in England and Scotland. These packs were the Belvoir, the Brocklesby, the Badminton, the Berkeley, Duke of Grafton's, Earl Fitzwilliam's, Earl of Coventry's, the Cottesmore, Lord Leconfield's, Lord Tredegar's, and Sir Watkin William Wynn's. The first genuine subscription pack of hounds, of which we have any reliable record, was founded in 1796 by Sir Peter Warburton, under the style of "The Cheshire County Subscription Hounds." In 1762 Boodle's Club was founded, as a London eating-house, for members of Hunt clubs, though it was not till 1770 that the famous Tarporley Hunt Club became a fox-hunting club. The members of these various Hunt clubs had, for all hunting intents and purposes, the same position as is now held by the members of a Hunt committee. It must be admitted that the Hunt club possessed a certain social significance which the modern Hunt committee does not possess. But what was the value of that social significance? At the commencement of the nineteenth century, Masters of Hounds were either large landowners, or else hunted a country in order to live out of the hounds.

There were many men, who, like Mr. Facey Romford, regarded the Mastership of Hounds as a commercial

sinecure. At the commencement of the twentieth century there is not a single Master of Hounds, who could, by the utmost elasticity of social scandal, be accused of living out of the hounds. It has been stated that a Hunt conducted on modern lines is similar to a limited liability company, in which the subscribers are the shareholders, while the Master of Hounds is the managing director. The similitude is erroneous if we regard the position from a commercial point of view. The managing director of a limited liability company receives a salary. He is paid for his services, whether they be good, bad, or indifferent, on a regular scale. He derives his income from the company, of which confiding shareholders have made him the managing director.

As a shareholder in that gigantic business "English Fox-hunting Limited," I wish to lodge a protest against the opinion that the Master of Hounds is merely the managing director of a local horse-breeding, agricultural business. Certainly, in the case of fifty packs of fox-hounds in England, the M.F.H. is out of pocket to the extent of £1000 pounds a year. In the case of one pack the expense amounted to £7000 a year. I allude to the Badminton Hunt, when under the Mastership of the late Duke of Beaufort. But the Duke of Beaufort received no subscription and conducted his hunting establishment upon a scale of lavish expenditure. Lavish expenditure, however, cannot be regarded as a necessity. The first duty of a Master of Hounds is to show good sport. The ostensible object for which we, his followers, have

come out is to see a fox killed. We have not come out to discuss local politics and the prospects of the forthcoming Grand National, or to flirt with the wives of our neighbours. Owing to a *cause célèbre*, which was enacted in the Law Courts at the end of 1902, it was seriously suggested that a Master of Hounds should not permit flirtations to take place in the hunting-field. All genuine hunting-men and hunting-ladies will agree with me, that there is a time for hunting and a time for making love. Besides, chattering magpies at covert-side often prevent hounds working properly in covert, more especially if the covert be a small gorse. Yet, where the lady is the principal culprit, and the man, like our universal progenitor Adam, can prove that the woman tempted him, few Masters care to exercise their authority by commanding the culprits either to be silent or go home. I believe, however, that I am echoing the opinions of all hunting sportsmen, when I say that it is their wish, as well as it is the wish of the lady followers of hounds, that the Master should make use of his autocratic power, in order to check the frivolity of misplaced philandering. The Master may retort, "How am I to check it?" If the lady has a male relation in the hunting-field, the male relation should be severely cautioned. But, in these days of feminine independence, it constantly happens that the lady is without any male chaperonage beyond that of boys, who, to use an expression of the late Mr. Haweis, are still in the early stages of vealy existence. Mr. Finch Mason, in one of his humorous hunting sketches, has depicted this type of lady surrounded by a throng

of youthful admirers, when she is greeted by the Master with the remark, "Cubhunting as usual!" But we cannot expect that every Master of Hounds should be an accomplished satirist, or should carry a pocket "Juvenal" about with him, from which to translate appropriate extracts as the occasion demands.

"Semper ego auditor tantum? Nunquamne reponam?"

Certainly it is not pleasant to hear a man abuse a woman in lurid language, however much the woman may deserve it; yet I have heard Masters, who in private life were the most refined gentlemen that the King could wish to see at his Court, soundly rate ladies in the hunting-field, who were spoiling sport by their foolish conduct. As the arguments in regard to ladies in the hunting-field are fully discussed elsewhere, it is unnecessary for me to make any further allusion to the subject in this chapter.

There have been many complaints during the last ten years, that much useless expense is incurred in the "turn-out" of a Hunting establishment, and that more attention is paid to the "pomp and circumstance" of the hunting-field than is paid to the actual sport of killing a fox. The controversy, which was raging in the sporting papers at the end of 1902, in reference to dress in the hunting-field, proved that, to use theatrical language, more regard is paid to the scenic arrangements than to the actual acting. Mr. Rawdon Lee, in his work on "Modern Sporting Dogs," tells us that often hounds, which have been drafted in order to make room for the fresh entries, are sold to

enterprising theatrical managers, who wish to make their hunting scenes as realistic as possible. But it is absurd and most unsportsmanlike to imitate theatrical pageantry in the hunting-field. Still more absurd is it to waste the money on the imitation, which is required for hound-breeding and for the purchase of suitable horses, on which to mount the Hunt servants. Moreover, the tenant-farmers object to this modern dandyism; and, as we depend upon the tenant-farmers for our sport, it is incumbent upon us to take their opinions into consideration. An old farmer, who has now joined the majority, said, "The fox was born to be hunted, not to kill geese." If he were alive now he might have added, "Nor to amuse geese." Not that I am insensible to the pageantry of fox-hunting. I think that it is a pity that we do not see hunting-scenes more often depicted on the walls of our Royal Academy. But the pageantry is a secondary consideration in connection with killing a fox. Therefore, if funds be short, renounce the pageantry, but kill the foxes. I have been told that, if a Master of Hounds were to renounce this pageantry and devote his energies and money solely to the legitimate promotion of sport, he would lose half his subscribers. I question the statement. In the first place, at a fashionable meet of hounds, barely ten per cent. of the congregation are subscribers. Of the odd ninety per cent. many are carriage people, who have only driven, or been driven to the meet, as if it was a social winter function, like driving through Hyde Park during the height of the London season. Then there are the short-skirted cyclists, who wonder why

foxes are not trained to run along the hard high-roads. Grooms, coachmen, and second horsemen form a large percentage of the crowd. There are the foot-people, many of whom are good sportsmen or sportswomen, but have been reduced to the use of "Shanks' pony." But who are these loud-talking people, who are jostling us at gates? Apparently they have hired any quadruped with any pretensions to be called a horse, in order to join "the glad throng as they canter along," and to do as much damage to the land as it is within the power of equine humanity to cause. They do not cause this damage wittingly, but merely in the exuberance of their animal spirits. Still, they do not subscribe, and would not be present, if it were not for their ambition to take an active part in the pageant. Moreover, as a rule they are cantankerous individuals, who, if they were invited to dine in the realms below, would come back and declare that the dinner was underdone and served up lukewarm. Their complaints in the smoking-room of a London club or a country house are as loud as the bellowings of the Bull of Bashan, till they dwindle down into the more sober language of Balaam's ass beneath the question, "How much do you subscribe to Hounds?" Briefly, they may be described as peripatetic fox-poachers, more guilty of dishonesty than the yokel who snares a hare on a moonlight night.

Much has been written and spoken in reference to the duties of a Master of Hounds. Now, it is as absolutely impossible to find a perfect Master of Hounds, as it is to find a perfect man or perfect woman. The

man who, in his own person, is a past-master in the science of hound-lore like Sir Thomas Boughey, who can ride to hounds like the late Mr. Tom Assheton Smith, who is on the same speaking terms with a fox as the late Duke of Beaufort, of whom it was said, when he was ill with gout, that he could hunt and kill a fox in his bath-chair, who can keep his field in order like the late Captain John White, who can live on his own estates with a kingly income like the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and who can wherewithal be popular with every man, woman, and child, from the peerage to the peasantry, is a prodigy which has yet to be created. Mr. Assheton Smith, after he founded the Tedworth Hunt, the late Duke of Beaufort, and in more modern days Mr. Garth, came as near the standard of perfection as can be reasonably expected by hunting-men. I had almost forgotten to mention Lord Althorp, afterwards Earl Spencer, who, as Master of the Pytchley Hounds, was notorious for his universal courtesy in the hunting-field. If it were possible to combine the qualifications which the gentlemen whose names I have mentioned possessed in one individual, then we should have the ideal Master of Hounds. But it must be remembered that, before these gentlemen had attained their qualifications, they had served a long apprenticeship in the hunting-field. Certainly Mr. Assheton Smith may be regarded by some people as an exception, for he was a born horseman, and a born judge of horses. Thus, in the famous Billesdon Coplow run, which took place on February 24, 1800, he rode a horse called Furzecutter, for which he had only

given £26. After the run he sold the horse to Lord Clonbrook for £400. Of Captain John White, familiarly known as "Black White," a poem was published from which I quote four lines:

"Says he, 'Young men of Manchester and Liverpool draw near,
I've just a word, a warning word, to whisper in your ear!
When starting from the covert, should you see bold reynard bust,
We cannot have no hunting, if the gemmen go fust.'"

But I do not think that Captain John White conveyed his warnings in the mild language with which the poet re-edited him. I have quoted the lines, however, to illustrate a complaint which regular subscribers to Hounds and tenant-farmers often make against the Master. By a curious coincidence this complaint has, at the beginning of the 1902–1903 season, been made by the Cheshire farmers at the Nantwich Farmers' Club. The complaint is not that the "young men of Manchester and Liverpool" are, to use hunting parlance, "thrusting scoundrels," but that they do unnecessary damage to the land by their thoughtlessness and ignorance of the rudiments of agriculture. Let it be clearly understood that I am not lodging this accusation solely against the Manchester and Liverpool sportsmen who hunt in Cheshire, for the accusation is applicable to all over-zealous, ignorant riders who do not reside in the country. I am alluding to the men who ride helter-skelter over the land, without any regard to the harm they may do to the occupier. Growing crops are an unknown quantity to them. To break down fences and hurdles by needlessly

attempting to jump them, is their pet diversion. To close a gate, so that live-stock may not stray over the country, is beyond their power of thought. Unwittingly, perhaps, but none the less surely, these men are worse enemies to hunting than the so-called humanitarian faddists, whose ravings against sport are published in the columns of fifth-rate newspapers. Not only are they a constant thorn in the side of the Master, but they are the bugbears of the regular followers of hounds, who strive their utmost to cause as little damage as possible to the land over which they ride. From the standpoint of the conscientious hunting-man they deserve the most unmitigated abuse which it is possible for them to receive from the lips of a Master of Hounds.

We must remember, however, that in these days the numerical strength of Fields is so large, that it is an impossibility for a Master during his first season to distinguish between the old members of the Hunt and the peripatetic sinners, who break all the recognised rules of hunting, who wear the outward garb of gentility in the shape of a pink coat, and who arouse the ire of the farmers by their ignorance and supercilious behaviour. It has been an oft-discussed question, whether an old and respected member of the Hunt should not be allowed to usurp for the moment the power of the Master, and publicly rebuke a delinquent whom he has caught *in flagrante delicto*. Personally, I am opposed to any usurpation of the authority of a Master or of a Hunt Secretary. In the first place, my experience is that Masters of Hounds

are apt to be jealous of any usurpation of their authority. In the second place, it would be difficult to define who is an old and respected member of the Hunt in these days, when young men are invited to join the Hunt Committee because they have inherited a long purse. There is another objection, which I once saw exemplified. An old, though not respected, member of the Hunt, loudly rebuked a young subscriber in language, such as ladies should not hear, and told him to go home. Now, if there were any offence it was committed by the old member, and not by the young subscriber. The two men jostled one another going through a hand-gate, at which the younger man was the first to arrive. The result was that their horses kicked. The young subscriber did not reply to the irascible language of the old member, but rode up to the Master, and, after briefly recounting the circumstances, asked him if he should go home. He was accompanied by another old member of the Hunt, who had witnessed the incident. In this case the Master poured oil upon the troubled waters, and so the matter ended. But it is not fair to ask the Master to adjudicate upon quarrels in the hunting-field, when he has multifarious duties to perform, which he owes to all his followers.

"Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace."

It can hardly be denied that a large proportion of the modern hunting-field is to be classified under the definition which Escalus, Prince of Verona, used in regard to the Capulets and the Montagues. Escalus,

however, was sufficiently powerful to be able to add:

> "Never you disturb our streets again,
> Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace."

Certainly there have been cases, where it has been delicately hinted to an undesirable follower of hounds that he might be baulked and ridden over at his fences. Writing of these rebellious subjects in *Country Sport* of November 15, 1902, "Marmaduke" states: "In the first place, they take their hunting in what, for want of a better word, I may term a 'casual' manner. They know nothing about it, and they are too conceited to learn. They have not the slightest interest in the men over whose land they are permitted to ride, and, worse than that, do not take the trouble to disguise the fact. They are wealthy, and in their heart of hearts despise those who are not. They show the insolence and the selfishness of wealth in a country, into which they are admitted on sufferance. I have heard a man swear at a farmer for not being quick enough to suit his impatience in opening a gate, and seen a lady ride through a gate, held open for her by the owner, with her nose in the air, and without so much as the thanks which should be rendered even to a servant under such circumstances." This is a strong denunciation from a cheery, optimistic writer, who seldom dips his pen in bitter ink. Of course, it is impossible for a Master to be everywhere at the same moment, so as to correct every breach, not only of hunting etiquette, but of the decent behaviour of ordinary life. Yet, I maintain, it is one of his duties to rid his hunting-field of the male

and female snobs, who, by their insolence, cause the farmers to become enemies to our great winter sport. It is the duty of the professional hunting journalist to place the curb upon the utterances and noisy attacks of bigoted sentimentalists, and to argue in regard to the political economy of hunting; but it is certainly not his duty to place snobs on the "black list," unless he does so at the request of the Master, or of the Hunt Secretary. Now, all the fashionable Hunts possess a hunting journalist, who duly records in the weekly papers accounts of the sport which the Hunt has enjoyed. The history of some of these accounts may be both instructive and amusing to Masters of Hounds and their followers.

In the first instance, which I wish to recount, the scribe was the village postmaster. The post-office was within a quarter of a mile of the kennels, and both these public establishments were within a comfortable walking distance of a comfortable hostelry, which always reminded me of "The Maypole" immortalised by Charles Dickens in "Barnaby Rudge." The post-office keeper, who was also a general chandler, bore a resemblance to short Tom Cobb, and the huntsman might have been the original of long Phil Parker, the ranger. As I listened to these cronies discussing the hunting news of the week, I expected to see the modern prototype of Sir John Chester in an iron-grey periwig and pigtail ride up to the door to sit for an equestrian portrait for the benefit of the local caricaturist. It was impossible for the most modest individual not to overhear the conversation of these cronies, or to be oblivious

to the pencilling on dirty envelopes which was taking place. However, let us cut the cackle and come to the 'osses, as my companions did. The huntsman briefly indicated the line which the fox had taken, and gave the names of the prominent members of the Hunt whom he had happened to see in the field. This was sufficient information upon which to write the short accounts of hunting runs which we see in the London daily papers. For the local paper more padding was required, which the huntsman supplied by the inch, according to the wishes of the local editor, expressed to him by the postmaster. Of course I did not learn how the profits were divided in this case. In another instance, one of the whippers-in supplied a London weekly paper with short accounts of runs, and at the end of the season was agreeably surprised to receive a five-pound note from the editor. What would a professional journalist say to such remuneration? The worst feature in regard to Hunt servants becoming newspaper correspondents is that they are seldom impartial. It must be remembered that there are many so-called hunting-men, who wish to see their names in print, because it is a good advertisement for them, from a business point of view. There is nothing immoral in this wish of Mr. Blank, the gentleman horse-dealer, who hunts in order to sell his horses, and who naturally wants to see their jumping and galloping powers extolled in the local newspaper. Thus, we constantly come across some such sentence as this: "The honours of the run clearly belonged to Mr. Blank, who, mounted on his famous grey mare, was

always to be seen in the first flight." There is another objection to Hunt servants becoming newspaper correspondents. It is impossible for them to criticise impartially their own conduct and the conduct of their Master in the hunting-field. The sporting journalist, if he be worth his salt, must do something more than give a bare outline of the run and the names of the people who were out. It may not be his duty to censure; certainly it is not his duty to dictate to the Master; but he should know how to bestow praise judiciously, when it is due, without being guilty of flattery. "If you can't write favourably, don't write at all," the editor of a London paper once said to me. This editorial instruction will account for the fact that we seldom see the conduct of a Master severely criticised in the newspapers. "Trial by newspaper," when the defendant is a Master of Hounds, generally means that a few members of the Hunt, who have a grievance against the Master, make use of the columns of a local newspaper in order to air the grievance.

I wish that all Masters of Hounds would imitate the example of Lord Lonsdale by making more use of the local newspaper for the benefit of fox-hunting in general and the tenant-farmers in particular. Lord Lonsdale, than whom the farmers have had few better friends, when he accepted the Mastership of the Quorn at the end of the season 1892–1893, at once devoted his energies to doing everything in his power to assist the landowners and tenant-farmers. Every week two sheets of the *Melton Mowbray Times and Lough-*

borough Advertiser were filled up with four columns as follows:

1st Column	2nd Column	3rd Column	4th Column
Names and addresses of Vendors	Description of Provender	The quantity	Remarks on quality

This was done in order that hunting-men might purchase their fodder direct from the farmers. Some people doubt the utility of any registration of provender in the hands of farmers on the ground that many hunting-men have no knowledge of the quality and value of corn and hay; but the doubt, to my mind, seems foolish, as the ignorant hunting-man has only to order his dealer to buy direct from a farmer resident in the country in which he hunts. Certainly the farmers think that it is the duty of the Master to do his utmost to see that the money spent by his followers should be circulated amongst the occupiers of the land over which they ride. But the duty requires an infinite amount of tact. The Master cannot make a fixed rule that his followers should buy their fodder from the farmers in the country which he hunts, but he can express his wish that they should do so; and, as Lord Lonsdale did, provide means by which the farmers can bring their wares before the notice of hunting-men.

There is another side from which we may view this question. It is seldom that the modern farmer can

afford to hunt, and it is difficult to make him comprehend the advantages which he derives from a sport which he cannot enjoy. You cannot lecture a farmer upon political economy. If you tell him that individual prosperity is the result of collective wealth, and that therefore he must prosper through the collective wealth of hunting-people, he will answer, "I do not hunt, and hunting damages my land: why, then, should I allow hounds to cross my farm?" Now it is the duty of the Master to do everything in his power in order to propitiate the farmers. So, of course, it is the duty of all hunting-people. But when the farmers in a hunting country suddenly assume a hostile attitude towards sport, the Master invariably has to bear the blame. Why should not the Master utilise the columns of the local newspaper in order to express his opinions?

I do not hold any brief for the proprietors and editors of provincial newspapers; but, where the provincial paper circulates amongst the local agricultural community, I think that it is wiser for the Master of Hounds to publish his views or edicts upon hunting in the columns of the paper than to issue circular letters amongst the members of the Hunt. Within the last three years it has become a custom for Masters of Hounds to issue circular letters. For two reasons I believe this custom to be mischievous. In the first place the letter is not read by the people for whom it is intended to be read; and, in the second place, it may give offence to genuine sportsmen. A Master of Hounds should publish his regulations so that all his followers may read, mark, learn and inwardly digest

them; but to send what may be regarded as a private letter indiscriminately to covert-owners, subscribers, and the poaching contingent of so-called hunting-men must lead to friction. In the circular letters which I have seen, the chief reference relates to the conduct of second horsemen. The reference is entirely unnecessary. It has always been the rule that the second horsemen of members of the Hunt should follow the second horsemen of the Master and the Hunt servants. The position of a second horseman, however, has never been clearly defined. Is the groom, to whom you have deputed the custody of your child, a second horseman, because you change horses with him? I agree with the abolition of pad-grooms, who were never on the spot when their mistresses required them; but to call the groom in charge of a child a second horseman is absurd. But the Master should define a child as a boy or girl who cannot be trusted to ride without the leading-rein. When our young sportsmen and sportswomen can be trusted to ride without the leading-rein, they should be able to take care of themselves in the hunting-field without the assistance of a dry nurse in the shape of a groom.

> "For forms of government let fools contest!
> Whate'er is best administered, is best."

It would be well if Masters of Hounds were to give more consideration to this couplet than they do give; and it would be well if the critics remembered the epitaph on the tomb of Peter Beckford in Stapleton Church:

"We die and are forgotten: 'tis Heaven's decree;
Thus the fate of others will be the fate of me."

"I am one who finds constant refreshment from reading a few pages of this healthy and vivid author, half sportsman and half poet, who has produced a number of volumes, which, in their way, are masterpieces, and will never be surpassed." Such was the tribute which Lord Rosebery publicly paid to the literary merits of Henry Hall Dixon, known to all sporting readers as "The Druid." Everybody will agree with the justice of the tribute, who has read the writings of "The Druid." During the last century he was *facile princeps* in sporting literature. But he rarely criticised the horsemanship, or conduct in the field, of Masters of Hounds, though in the character of biographer he recounted the criticisms of that extraordinary man, Dick Christian, who for fifty years held a unique position in the hunting-field as a rough-rider. These criticisms, however, most of which were adverse, hardly concern modern Masters of Hounds. Like the writings of Mr. Charles James Apperley, they merely possess an interest for the students of foxhunting history. I wonder what a Master of Hounds would say if it were intimated to him that a twentieth-century "Nimrod" was coming down to hunt with him on a certain day, and to inspect his hunting establishment. Mr. Jorrocks certainly invited Pomponius Ego, for whose portrait Mr. Apperley unconsciously sat before Mr. Surtees, to "come here and take a look at our most provincial pack. *Entre nous*, as we say in France, I want to be famous, and you know how to do it. In

course, mum's the word." Ego, in a P.S. to his reply, writes: "What would you like to be done in? The *Q.R.*, the *O.S.M.*, the *N.S.M.*, the *S.R.*, the *S.*, *Fraser*, *Blackwood*, *New Monthly*, *Old* ditto, 'The Encyclopædia,' 'Oracle of Rural Life,' or 'Almanack for Country Gentlemen?'" Speaking to his huntsman, Pigg, of Ego's approaching visit, Mr. Jorrocks says: "If by any unlucky chance he blames an 'untsman, or condemns a pack, it's all dickey with them for ever; for no living man dare contradict him, and every one swears by what he says." It was in 1822 that "Nimrod," in conjunction with Mr. Pittman, the editor of the *Sporting Magazine*, pioneered hunting journalism, and so great was the success that Mr. Pittman paid "Nimrod" at the rate of £20 a page. Shortly afterwards, the *Sporting Review* was founded by the Messrs. Ackermann, to which "Nimrod" contributed; and in 1838 Mr. Murray published in the *Quarterly Review* "Nimrod's" celebrated articles on the "Chase," "the Turf," and the "Road," for which he paid him one hundred and seventy guineas.

It has been objected that Mr. Apperley was never a hunting critic, but merely a travelling agent seeking advertisements from Masters of Hounds, and that therefore a large discount should be deducted from the value of his opinions. Be this as it may, the occupation of "Nimrod" became a thing of the past, thirty years at least before the commencement of the twentieth century. So great is the present popularity of hunting, that Masters of Hounds not only do not require any advertisement, but detest the hunting

peripatetic journalist, who, by his adulatory reports, causes non-subscribing strangers to follow his hounds. Thus, in Yorkshire, at Farnley Hall, Otley, Mr. Fawkes founded a new pack of hounds, at the beginning of the 1902–1903 season, with the rule that his fixtures would not be advertised, and that cards would be sent only to landowners and farmers. The late Lord Willoughby de Broke regarded the journalist in much the same light as Mephistopheles is supposed to have viewed "holy water." Still, Masters of Hounds must remember that they hold a public position and are as liable to criticism as are his Majesty's Ministers. Why should they shrink from the criticism? Surely, it is better to be told of your faults than to be suddenly asked to resign your mastership? There are few, if any, Masters of Hounds who are cognisant of the prejudices of all the occupiers of land in their hunting country, and so are often apt to give unintentional offence. Surely, it is the duty of the members of the Hunt to warn the Master in regard to their prejudices?

There is one complaint, which I have constantly heard made against the Master of Hounds, namely, his neglect to sound his horn when a fox breaks covert with hounds on good scenting terms with him. His usual defence is that his followers should know what hounds are doing. Now, where there are no "rides" in the covert, the followers are not supposed to enter the covert. They should remain outside. If the fox steals away from the far corner with hounds close to his brush, the major portion of the field can know nothing of the fact, unless they hear the sound of the

horn. I am a staunch believer in what is termed "the silent system" of hunting, and am sure that the Master who is continually blowing his horn loses many foxes, for which his hounds would otherwise have accounted. But there is a vast difference between continually blowing the horn, like a cornet player at a Covent Garden Promenade Concert, and sounding the "gone away" notes, when hounds stream out of covert. To say the least of it, it is unsportsmanlike to leave the sportsmen and sportswomen in the lurch, when they pay their subscriptions solely in order that they may be provided with sport. *Verbum sapienti sufficit.* I will accordingly proceed to the criticism of kennel management.

No conscientious Master of Hounds should leave the tuition of the entry entirely in the hands of the kennel huntsman, as shooting-tenants leave the breaking of their dogs to their keepers. As "Dryasdust" wrote in *Land and Water*, some years ago: "The Master, who should be cognisant of every detail, and with whom should rest every appeal in all that concerns the management of a pack of foxhounds, loses the opportunity of judging for himself what are likely to prove the characters of the young aspirants of the pack, and he is obliged to entrust the very important task of drafting to his huntsman." To watch the progress of the entry, and to determine from his own observation what young hands are worthy of a place in the kennel list, and as likely to contribute to the strength and efficiency of the pack, is one of the first duties of a Master of Hounds. Many kennel huntsmen may have

surpassed their Masters in their knowledge of hound-breeding. With the Badminton there were Philip Payne and Will Long, with the Belvoir Goosey and Will Goodall; Jem Hills with the Heythrop; last, but far from least, Tom Sebright, who was for thirty-seven years huntsman with the Milton pack. These men were noted judges of hounds, but I do not think that, as a rule, at the present day kennel huntsmen can surpass their Masters in knowledge of hounds. During the last few years the custom of Masters hunting their own hounds, *i.e.*, acting as their own huntsmen in the field instead of employing a paid servant, has largely increased in popularity, as the following statistics prove, which I have placed in tabular form for the convenience of reference:

MASTERS WHO HUNT THEIR OWN HOUNDS

5 Masters of stag-hounds,	out of	18	packs in	England
52 Masters of fox-hounds,	„	164	„	„
2 Masters of fox-hounds,	„	10	„	Scotland
18 Masters of fox-hounds,	„	26	„	Ireland
47 Masters of harriers,	„	95	„	England
1 Master of harriers,	„	3	„	Scotland
17 Masters of harriers,	„	25	„	Ireland
14 Masters of beagles,	„	56	„	England and Ireland

The above statistics are compiled from the supplement to the *Field* of October 18, 1902.

Now a Master of Hounds who hunts his own pack must necessarily be, to a large extent, cognisant of hound lore; yet the Peterborough Hound Show has been in existence for forty-three years, during which

period the average number of Masters exhibiting has not exceeded twenty-five. In regard to these Masters, it has been said that they breed with an eye to Peterborough, *i.e.*, with a view to Show triumph. Nothing can be more absurd than this indictment made against such famous sportsmen as the late Lord Willoughby de Broke. The truth is, that, so far as there can be any certainty in the breeding of live stock, foxhound-breeding has been reduced to an exact science. Let me again quote from Mr. Rawdon B. Lee's work on "Modern Sporting Dogs": "No hound or dog has changed so little in appearance and character during a century as the foxhound. There have been no crazes for fashionable colour, or for head formed or ears hung, on purely fanciful principles. Hunters wanted a dog for work, they soon provided one, and have kept and sustained that animal for the purpose."

The first object of the hound-breeding Master is to bring a pack of hounds into the field which can account for its foxes satisfactorily, and he must remember that the hounds which can race over the big pastures of Leicestershire would be utterly at fault in the rocky hills of Westmoreland and Cumberland.

> "He cried upon it at the merest loss,
> And twice to-day picked out the dullest scent."

I don't know that the argument between the Lord and his huntsman in the induction about the relative merits of the hounds has anything to do with the *Taming of the Shrew*, but it proves that Shakespeare would have been a good hunting critic in these days.

Undoubtedly many Masters breed too much with a view to legs and feet and are apt to ignore nose and working powers. More especially is this the case when they leave the kennel management entirely in the hands of the huntsman, which, owing to circumstances, they are sometimes obliged to do. But the circumstances ought not to arise, nor need they arise, if the Master of the Hounds resided close to the kennels. It is incumbent that the Master should be "the man on the spot." There have been exceptions where famous judges of hounds lived at a long distance from the kennels, notably Sir Thomas Boughey, and his successor Captain Foster, both of whom resided many miles from the Albrighton Kennels at Whiston Cross, when they hunted the Albrighton country. But they possessed in John Scott one of the best kennel huntsmen in England, who was invited to, and did, judge at the Peterborough Hound Show, while he was huntsman to the Albrighton.

"Yes, I daresay that he may be a very good man in the field, but he knows nothing of hound-lore." How often do we hear that complaint made against a Master of Hounds! In certain so-called fashionable hunting establishments hounds are bred with great precision and care for pedigree. This, however, may be described as the consequence of book-lore, not of hound-lore. It is not till the early cub-hunting season has commenced that the Master of foxhounds is in a position to judge what puppies should be drafted and what puppies should be entered to fox. It must be admitted that it is extremely difficult for an M.F.H. to avoid

giving offence when drafting his young hounds in these days, when the "walking of puppies" is almost entirely in the hands of the fair sex. Naturally, the Master does not wish to disappoint a lady who has taken the trouble to "walk a puppy" for him by drafting the puppy. So it happens that many worthless young hounds are entered to fox and many promising young hounds are drafted, merely in order to oblige the ladies. I admit that there is a very great difficulty in persuading people to "walk puppies" as a personal favour without any remuneration beyond a prize at the local puppy show, and the greatest credit, and the most sincere thanks of all followers of hounds are due to the sportswomen who "walk puppies." I do not believe, however, in the present fashion of asking a lady to "walk a puppy" for many reasons. I will instance a case which came within my own knowledge. A married lady was asked by the Master to "walk a puppy." She was a keen sportswoman and the wife of a large subscriber to the Hunt, but she was also passionately fond and proud of her flower-garden, and knew the damage which a mischievously disposed puppy would do her flowers. So she firmly but politely refused to "walk a puppy," stating her reasons for the refusal, and also offering to give a prize at the local puppy show. The offer was accepted; but in local hunting circles it was said that Mrs. —— cared more for her flowers than she did for the hounds. There is another point, namely, that puppies, which have been under the care of ladies, have been invariably petted, and need much trouble and more than ordinary severity

in their later education. I know that when a lady has agreed to "walk a puppy" she receives with the puppy written instructions as to how she ought to treat him, and I also know that those instructions are often disregarded. The lady can hardly be expected to treat the puppy during his infantile maladies and rub him with dressings which, to say the least, do not resemble Eau de Cologne. The treatment is entrusted to the head groom, who entrusts it to the second groom, who entrusts it in his turn to a stable lad. On the other hand, the farmers and their wives or their daughters, as a rule, take a pride and a personal interest in sending the young hounds home well grown and well fed. These young hounds during their puppyhood have had the run of the farm, where they could not do much damage. They have not been alternately petted by a lady and bullied by a gardener, and their diet is likely to be more regular at the farmhouse than at the mansion.

"Scrutator" regarded the "walking of puppies" from a commercial point of view. In "Horses and Hounds" he wrote: "Giving premiums, also, is an encouragement to have the young hounds well kept, and I found it paid wonderfully; for the best dog £4, second £3, third £2, fourth £1, and the same for bitches." He prefaces this statement with the remark that "some little acknowledgment ought to be made to the farmer's wife." I may be asked by a Master, "what has the 'walking of puppies' to do with the followers of hounds?" It has a good deal to do with them, if the Master asks them to "walk a puppy"

instead of sending the puppies to the farms. Also, the follower of hounds who consents to "walk a puppy" must, unless he leaves the treatment entirely in the hands of a servant, learn the rudiments of hound-lore, though he may not be able to qualify as a scientific breeder of hounds. Moreover, every hunting-man should take an interest in the hounds which supply him with his sport. According to the present custom, the Master supplies the raw material in the shape of whelps, and asks his followers to give him the finished article in the shape of healthy young hounds. In regard to this process of canine education I will now quote three opinions.

Peter Beckford, in Letter V. of his "Thoughts on Hunting," writes: "The distemper makes dreadful havoc with whelps at their walks, greatly owing, I believe, to the little care that is taken of them there. I am in doubt whether it might not be better to breed them up yourself and have a kennel on purpose. You have a large orchard paled in, which should suit them exactly; and what else is wanted might easily be obtained. There is, however, an objection, that perhaps may strike you, if the distemper once get amongst them—they must all have it; yet notwithstanding *that*, as they will be constantly well fed and will lie warm, I am confident it would be the saving of many lives." Peter Beckford's plan has, however, been proved to be impossible in the modern practice of hound-rearing.

Mr. J. Otho Paget, who edited the last edition of Beckford's "Thoughts on Hunting," published by Methuen, 1899, says, in a foot-note: "Hounds, to be

reared successfully, must go out to walk: the risks of accidents and distemper will have to be chanced. The best plan is to give a handsome luncheon to the puppy walkers and prizes for the best hounds; this will encourage the farmers to look after their charges and make them take an interest in the pack. The hounds that survive the danger of walks always appear to have more sense than those that are kept at home." In another foot-note he says: "Unless the pups look well when they go out, you cannot expect them to be in good order on their return." It will be seen that Mr. Paget, writing at the close of the nineteenth century, does not contemplate the cases where puppies are walked at the mansion-house. Yet I have known puppies to be "walked" by the occupiers of suburban villas, to the great annoyance of their neighbours. Certainly, the suburban villa possessed an orchard or paddock, which Peter Beckford apparently thought sufficient for the purpose of "walking puppies"; but then the orchard or paddock was not paled in, so as to prevent the canine pupil from running out of bounds.

Let me now quote a few lines from "Scrutator's" "System of Kennel and Science of Fox-hunting."

"Where whelps are sent out to very distant walks, some forty or fifty miles from kennel, where they are far removed from the supervision of master and man, it is no uncommon thing for them to meet with rough usage and coarser fare during the chief part of their sojourn there; but as the time approaches for their return they are then fatted up for the occasion, to

make a fair show in the kennel; and this is a trick of which tenants at a distance are too often guilty. Perhaps we ought not to lay this charge exactly to themselves, but their *better halves*—and in truth, at farmhouses generally, "the grey mare is the better horse." The master is obliged to be in the field from sunrise to sunset, either superintending labourers or himself working according to his status, whilst the missus is engaged in her household duties, making butter or cheese, feeding young ducks and chickens, &c.; and a mischievous fox-hound puppy is more likely to interfere than to assist her in these occupations. He will very probably be running off with a cheese-cloth or pat of butter, or running down a screaming young cockerel in the yard, for which and sundry other malpractices, in which puppy dogs are wont to indulge, he is almost sure to incur the dire displeasure of the missus, unless she is endowed with an angelic temper, and receive as his reward monkey's allowance in more senses than one. The experiment having been tried over and over again of rearing young hounds in the kennel without success, Masters are obliged to send them out and run all risks. Two or three may be bred up at home, if allowed to run about the premises, but if confined within four walls, without daily exercise, their feet will bear a nearer resemblance to those of a duck than those of a cat. Moreover, home education is as objectionable for young fox-hounds, as it is for young gentlemen."

Now "Scrutator" was a Master of foxhounds, and his postulates demand respect, though we may disagree

with him. Thus, I certainly disagree with his allusion to "monkey's allowance." Before a Master sends a whelp to a farm he should satisfy himself in regard to the character of the farmer's wife. The wisest plan would be for him to visit the lady, as Sir John Chester visited Mrs. Varden, salute her according to the custom of the country, if the farmer be absent, and by Machiavellian flattery persuade her to obey his wishes. This is a duty which, under no circumstances, should the Master ever delegate to his huntsman. As I have said, in the higher grades of country society, the position of the Master is second only to that of the Lord Lieutenant during the hunting season. Amongst the farming classes he should be regarded as the paramount lord of the country which he hunts; and it is his own fault if he is not regarded as such. He must, however, take care to "summer the country."

> "Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis
> Ut prisca gens mortalium,
> Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
> Solutus omni fenore."

But the Masters of Hounds who, like the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, live on their own estates, not only during the sporting seasons of the year but throughout the summer, are few and far between. So all details in regard to kennel management are left to the discretion of the huntsman, who is bound to exercise his supervision over the puppies out at walk.

But I have already exceeded the limits of a chapter, and I do not wish the readers to say: "He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of

his argument." Besides, in further chapters I shall have the opportunity of recounting the criticisms, favourable and delivered with faint praise, which I have received from followers of hounds in regard to their Masters. Of distinctly unfavourable opinions I shall take no notice, as the incompetent or unpopular Master can only be judged by a jury of his personal followers. I can only add that it has been my happy lot to know many Masters of Hounds, and that I have never known one who was either incompetent or unpopular.

CHAPTER VI

FAMOUS CRITICS OF MASTERS OF HOUNDS

Dick Christian—"The Druid"—Major Whyte Melville—Mr. Surtees.

DICK CHRISTIAN

OF Dick Christian it was written :

> **"What gallant run did brave Meltonians share**
> **But thou wast forward or the foremost there?"**

And no truer words were ever penned.

It is difficult for those of us, who have been educated under the modern conditions of fox-hunting, to assign to Dick Christian his proper position in hunting history. His position is unique, for it may be safely asserted that he is the only professional rough-rider, who has ever risen to eminence on account of his horsemanship in the hunting-field. We have had, and still have, many huntsmen, whippers-in, and steeplechase jockeys entitled to rank amongst the giants of the hunting-field as professional riders; but the claims of Dick Christian to be remembered by posterity are founded on his prowess as a rough-rider. He has had scores of imitators, but they have met with little encouragement. Masters of Hounds have hinted to them in an unmistak-

THE ALBRIGHTON HOUNDS. MEET AT STRETTON, 1901

PLATE VII

able manner that their room is preferable to their company in the hunting-field, and the general public regards them as horse-copers. It may appear harsh that, owing to the dishonesty of a few individuals, the calling of a professional rough-rider has been abolished by the verdict of public opinion; but it must also be remembered that there are now many gentlemen who are good horsemen, but who cannot afford to keep horses. As a rule, they are younger sons, who have been educated in the same way as their elder brothers, and, on arriving at man's estate, find that the estate does not include stabling. But they love hunting, and are willing to accept a mount on the biggest rogue that was ever foaled, in order that they may enjoy their passion for seeing hounds. Thus the occupation of the rough-rider has gone, or is limited to the men-of-all-work who act as grooms to horse-dealers. Again, it is not desirable that the hunting-field should be turned into a dealer's yard. In Dick Christian's time it did not matter, for very few men hunted then as compared with the numbers of the present day. There was room for everybody, and a rough-rider on a raw young 'un did not interfere with his neighbours. What sort of a reception would he get now at a popular fixture of the Quorn?

The fact that Dick Christian has had no imitators adds to the difficulty of writing about him, since he had no rivals with whom we can compare him. It is almost impossible to form an estimate of his riding abilities. Thus, such an authority as the late Duke of Beaufort has described him as a butcher on a horse,

while Squire Osbaldeston, on the other hand, considered him the best man across Leicestershire. It is, however, easy to reconcile the two statements. It was Christian's business to be in the first flight, and to be seen in the first flight. To achieve this object he might punish his horse, but there is, so far as I have been able to discover, no record that he was ever cruel to a horse. Besides, it would be absurd to think that a man who had the reputation of being cruel to horses would have been asked to ride for such men as Lord Forester, Lord Middleton, Lord Alvanley, the Marquis of Waterford, and Squire Osbaldeston. A further point upon which I lay great stress is that a man seldom develops bad habits, unless he has acquired them in boyhood. A man who is cruel to his horse probably started his hunting career by being cruel to his pony. Now, Christian's tuition took place at Sir Horace Mann's riding-school at Cottesmore, which was superintended by Stevenson. His own version of his tuition is that he left home in the morning, ostensibly for school, played truant, and went to Stevenson, whom he persuaded to allow him to ride the horses at exercise. It is most improbable to the last degree of improbability, that the manager of a riding-school would allow a ten-year-old urchin, as Christian then was, to ride valuable horses if he evinced the slightest signs of crueltry.

As a man Christian was abnormally strong in the arm, and, according to "The Druid," could "lift" a horse over his fences better than any man in Leicestershire. Surely the science of "lifting" a horse over his fences helps the horse and cannot be called cruelty!

I wonder how many men understand the science? I have seen many men attempt to "lift" their horses, and the result has generally ended in dire disaster. My own experience is that a horse knows his business better than his rider; but then there is a difference between riding "made" hunters and the raw 'uns on which Dick Christian held his own in the first flight with the Quorn. Yet he was never a "thrusting scoundrel." He said to "The Druid": "It's not the big fences I'm afraid of. I never go near 'em, but it's the little 'uns I'm afraid of." But Dick was the last man in the world to turn his horse's head from a fence when he had once put him at it. Writing about the accomplishments of the hunting-field, "The Druid," in "Silk and Scarlet," pays this tribute to Dick Christian: "A gentleman, who practically explains all the above accomplishments to the great edification of young horses and the no less astonishment of weak minds."

It is much to be regretted that Dick Christian never took to writing, for he could have given us more information about hunters than any man who has ever put pen to paper. But the boy who played truant from the school, where they taught the three R.s, in order to attend the school where they taught horsemanship, was not likely to devote his energies to literature in later life. I am informed that he had a supreme contempt for hunting journalism, though he had a warm affection for Mr. Dixon, alias "The Druid," to whom he gave some particulars of his life, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he was residing at Norton by Bessingborough. These particulars were published in

"Silk and Scarlet," but are too voluminous for analysis in these pages. However, I cannot refrain from quoting his opinion in regard to hunters: "Give me 'em lengthy, shortlegged for Leicestershire. I wouldn't have 'em no bigger than 15.3: great rump, hips, and hocks: fore legs well afore 'em, and good shoulders: thoroughbred if you can get 'em, but none of your high, short horses. Thoroughbred horses make the best hunters. I never heard of a great thing yet, but it was done by a thoroughbred horse." He was fond of talking of "The Prince of Wales's Day," with the Cottesmore. "He was nowhere, bless you: they gave 'im the brush, though, just to please 'im. (N.B.—The Prince of Wales was afterwards George IV.) Another of his expressions was "tremendious," his favourite epithet in describing fences; but, though he would talk of the exploits of his contemporaries, he rarely spoke of his own, even to Mr. Dixon. One exploit of Sir Gilbert Heathcote he witnessed, which subsequently gave the idea to Mr. John Leech for one of his best-known sketches. It was Sir Gilbert Heathcote who rode over the parson, and exclaimed, "You can lie where you are, sir: you won't be wanted till next Sunday."

Latterly, Dick's memory failed him. Mr. Dixon did everything in his power to restore it, and drove him in a gig about Leicestershire, thinking that the sight of the old familiar scenes would bring back recollections of what had been "The Waterloo of his existence." But the drives were of little use. He was then in his seventy-eighth year, and had nearly finished the run of

his life. Nobody will deny that he rode well throughout.

Is it conceivable that a man like Dick Christian could exist under the conditions of modern fox-hunting? I know several gentlemen who hunt three or four days a week on an income of £200, but would be angry if they were classed as professional riders. They are on terms of social equality with their employers, and are as much at home in the boudoir as they are in the saddle-room. They are men who work as hard as any groom in order that they may enjoy their sport. But they do not profess to earn a living out of sport. It was Dick Christian's profession to earn his livelihood out of the hunting-field. He rode in many steeplechases, but he was never a cross-country jockey, as we understand the phrase. He bought and sold many horses, but he never was a professional dealer. He was paid for giving opinions upon the merits or demerits of many horses, but he was never a veterinary surgeon. He was "hail fellow well met" with everybody, from George IV. to an earthstopper; and he could hardly write his own name. His life presents a striking example of the change which has taken place in our social and sporting customs since the beginning of the century. We have now our professional cross-country riders, our veterinary surgeons, and our dealers, on whose integrity we can rely, and the exigencies of the times do not require a combination of the three professions. There are gentlemen-riders who will school our horses, in the same way as there are men who will shoot our

birds, for the sake of board and lodging. I do not assert that Dick Christian's profession is obsolete; but that a professor capable of following in his footsteps has yet to be found, must be the opinion of every hunting-man. To him are especially applicable the lines of Major Whyte-Melville. He was a man

> "To whom naught comes amiss,
> One horse or another, that country or this,
> Through falls or bad starts who undauntedly still
> Rides up to the motto, 'Be with them I will.'"

"THE DRUID"

Having just had occasion to refer to Mr. Dixon, better known to lovers of sport as "The Druid," I will take this opportunity of writing a few words about him. He was the second son of Mr. Peter Dixon, a large cotton manufacturer, who resided at Holme Eden, near Carlisle, whose family had long been noted for fostering commercial enterprise in the old cathedral city. But, like his more celebrated son, Mr. Peter Dixon, was a man of widespread sympathies and hunted regularly with the Inglewood Hounds. As a lad, young Dixon suffered severely from ophthalmia, and constantly had to spend days together in an artifically darkened room. Thus, it was not till 1838, when he was sixteen years of age, that he was sent to Rugby, then under the mastership of Dr. Arnold. He left Rugby in 1840, having reached "the twenty," *i.e.*, the form immediately below the sixth, and being six feet in height and strong in proportion. Before, leaving, he was requested by Dr. Arnold to come into his study, when the doctor thanked him for the support and encouragement which he had always given by his good example and high principles to the moral elevation of all around him, adding: "I value character and example much more than talent and scholarship." But young Dixon, though an indifferent mathematician, had imbibed a love for classical scholarship, which is apparent in all his multitudinous writings. Of his

Rugby days "The Druid" wrote as follows: "When I first went there, everything about it was calculated to encourage a sporting taste. Lord Chesterfield was living at Abington Abbey, near Northampton, and hunting the Pytchley in a style I have never seen approached since; and many is the time I have rushed off after second lesson in the generally visionary hope of seeing his hounds draw Hillmorton Gorse. Mr. Bradley's stag-hounds were also in full force." Steeplechasing, too, was just becoming all the rage, and kindhearted Dr. Arnold, determined that "the fellows," as he used to call them, should have no pretext to disobey orders, dispensed with "calling over" one afternoon, in order to let them see the fun which was going on at Dunchurch. One result of this indulgence was the pentameter:

"Lottery primus erat, Nonna secunda fuit."

Lottery, with Jem Mason up, being first, and The Nun, with William MacDonough up, being second, in the Dunchurch Steeplechase of 1840. So great was the love of sport that the Rugby boys subscribed £15 to the Rugby Steeplechases. But the line had to be drawn somewhere, and the doctor drew it by forbidding boys to ride themselves. It came about in this way. A boy in the schoolhouse offered to ride any other boy over four miles of fair hunting country, and the challenge was taken up by Mr. Uvedale Corbet, afterwards a well-known Cheshire squire. The race was run from Bilton Church to Newbold Steeple, and resulted in a win for Mr. Corbet. This led to a resolu-

tion to have a big race, for which there were several entries; but though the doctor had overlooked the match, he threatened to expel every boy who rode in or looked on at the race. Needless to say no steeplechase ever came off, nor was any ever attempted again. I may mention that before Dr. Arnold's time the Rugby boys sported a pack of beagles, and shooting, or rather poaching, was openly practised. Many of "The Druid's" sport-loving schoolfellows are still alive to

> "Gaze from grand stands with their hair silver-gray,
> And totter 'neath guns till their ankles give way."

Yet "The Druid" was not very popular with his schoolfellows, owing to his disinclination to join in their games, though he is reported to have jumped a gate six feet high on the Barby Road, which for many years afterwards was pointed out as Dixon's gate. The first time that the lady, who subsequently became his wife, ever saw "The Druid" was at Rugby, when a boy pointed him out to her, saying, "Look at that ass! He never joins in any of our games or sports, but writes everlasting yarns for *Bell's Life*." The lady was then fifteen, and "The Druid" seventeen years of age.

In 1841 "The Druid" went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had the reputation of being as shy as a woodcock. This shyness never left him. Cambridge did not give him the partiality for horseflesh which the proximity to Newmarket often imparts to her pupils and which "The Druid" afterwards acquired to such an extent. On the contrary, he was studious and

retired, evincing predilections in favour of the classics. Unfortunately, his deadly foe, ophthalmia, constantly interfered with his studies, and in mathematics he had to be content with the humble place of "wooden spoon." At this critical time he proposed to Miss Caroline Lynes, third daughter of Thomas Lynes, Esq., of Hackleton House, Northampton, and was met with a refusal. This so deranged his health that brain fever ensued. But upon further acquaintance Miss Lynes was induced to change her mind, and they were married on May 12, 1847. At this time "The Druid" was settled in Doncaster, where he was presumed to be reading in an attorney's office; but, like his old friend, Mr. Daley, long the clerk of the course at Carlisle, he did not enjoy calf-skin, and soon settled down into a sporting writer, much to his father's annoyance, though he did not stop his yearly allowance. At last, however, a book appeared from his pen, entitled "The Law of the Farm," which so gladdened the old man's heart that he sent him a cheque for £100. This book, however, did not appear till 1858, or nearly eight years after "The Druid" had moved to London, which he did during 1850. But his Doncaster life had brought out the salient features of his writing. From contributing articles on all sorts of subjects to the *Doncaster Gazette*, he rose to the position of manager of that journal and was by many regarded as its avowed and acknowledged editor. However, technical editorial work was the least important thing that he learnt, for it was at this time that he really began to study Nature and more particularly men and horses. Country lanes

and wild moorland were more to his taste than the office of Mr. Baxter, attorney, or even the editorial sanctum. Through his friend, James White, alias "Martingale," he soon made the acquaintance of every sporting character in the neighbourhood, and his natural appetite for conversing with all sorts and conditions of men, and of being equally at home with the peer and the peasant, found ample scope for indulgence. He was as much in his element pumping some decrepit herdsman in a remote ingle-nook or chimney-corner, as he was, in spite of his shyness, in the mansions of the nobility. Perhaps his greatest talent was his capacity for getting humble and unlettered men to bestow their confidence upon him This was exemplified in the confidence which Dick Christian bestowed upon him. It was at Doncaster also that he first showed his proficiency in horse-lore, and we can imagine him and "Martingale" on the Town Moor. When he had once seen a horse, he seldom forgot him, a talent which was of great assistance to him in after life, when he earned his bread, *inter alia*, by paddock reporting, and won the name of "The Old Mortality of the Turf." Not that his attention was confined to racehorses. Indeed, his predilection was for hunters and hacks, of which subsequently his brother-in-law, Mr. George B. Lynes, was a successful breeder, close to Althorp Park, in Northamptonshire. Mr. Lynes attributed no small portion of the success which attended his breeding efforts to the advice given him by "The Druid." He advised Mr. Lynes to put his first mare to King of Oude, the result

being Rural Dean, who was bought by the Prince of Wales and was considered by the Prince to be the best all-round horse that he ever possessed. Mr. Rarey, when in search of savages, afterwards bought King of Oude, and took him to America, though Mr. Lynes had a standing offer of 200 guineas for every colt or filly by King of Oude out of Rural Dean's dam. I should add that Mr. Lynes subsequently migrated to Virginia, not far from Charlottesville, a country which he considered wonderfully well adapted for breeding blood stock.

"The Druid" was only permanently engaged on the staff of four papers, viz., the *Doncaster Gazette*, *Bell's Life*, the *Mark Lane Express*, and the *Sporting Life*, though he was a regular contributor to many others, notably the *Sporting Magazine* and the *Daily News*. Yet, in spite of his numerous contributions to sporting literature, his income never averaged more than £600 per annum. No writer could have performed his work more conscientiously. So delicate was his sense of honour that when he went down to a stud farm to describe a yearling sale, he would not even accept luncheon from the owner of the place, lest he might be suspected of being biased. He made Mr. Rarey's fortune, but, when the latter made a complimentary present to Mrs. Dixon, he indignantly demanded her to return it. As a rule, he never betted. His knowledge of the Turf was gained by an occasional stroll on to a racecourse on a crack afternoon, through the boxes at Tattersall's, or among the paddocks of a stud farm. Yet, in regard to accuracy, his descriptions have never

been surpassed. But it was for his endurance of hardships, exposure to weather, scanty fare, and personal discomfort, and for a courage which never flinched when suffering from painful sickness and exhausting disease, that he was pre-eminent. When it is remembered that he rode on horseback from the Orkneys to Kensington in the severe winter of 1864–5, arriving at home, in the snow of a February night, with fourpence in his pocket, on the back of a Highland garron, which he had bought for £7 10*s*., little surprise will be felt that he never recovered from the effects of the journey. For four years he was unable to lie down, and at night was packed in an armchair. During this last painful period of his life he regularly wrote sporting and agricultural leaders for the *Daily News*, then mainly owned by Mr. Robinson and Mr. Labouchere, who would have poured liquid gold down his throat if it had been possible to keep him alive. But it was not to be. To use his own expression, all the wheels were down, and after the spring of 1870 he passed away. The Hon. Francis Lawley, to whose admirable book on "The Life and Times of 'The Druid,'" I, in common with many sportsmen, am deeply indebted, applied this epitaph to him :

> "No pearl ever lay under Oman's dark water
> More pure in its shell than thy spirit in thee."

It is a comfort to know that his dying bed was soothed by the unwearied ministrations and tender solicitude of his wife, by the constant affection of his devoted friend, Mr. John Thornton, and by the

generosity and kindness of Sir Tatton Sykes, for, as Mr. Lawley has written of him, he was truly the most unselfish, courageous, modest, conscientious, and pure-minded of men.

"The touch of a vanished hand,
The sound of a voice that is still."

How truly do these lines apply to such men as "The Druid" and Major Whyte-Melville! We feel that we are with them in the spirit, for do not

"Souls attract souls, when they're of kindred vein?"

MAJOR WHYTE-MELVILLE

The name of Whyte-Melville is so familiar, not only to hunting people but to everybody who takes an interest in English literature, that it would seem impossible to write anything concerning his life which is not already known to the reading public. As soldier, novelist, poet, and sportsman his name stands out in bold relief. Yet, though many of his old comrades in the chase are alive, his biography has never been written in volume form. Perhaps a long biography is not necessary, for Major Whyte-Melville lived with us in his novels and in his poems. He used to say that the two great objects of his life were "the pigskin and the pen," and he devoted his days to hunting and his evenings to literary work. Although during his life he had a larger share of the *aliquid amari*, than falls to the lot of most men, he only made one enemy, namely, the manufacturer of barbed wire. His lines :

> "And bitter the curses you launch in your ire
> At the villain who fenced his enclosure with wire,"

are the only words which I have been able to discover that he ever penned in a vindictive spirit.

It was on December 5, 1875, that the death of Whyte-Melville occurred, while he was hunting with the V.W.H. Hounds. It is no exaggeration to say that the event was regarded as a public calamity. At first it could hardly be credited that so good a rider, a man

possessing such knowledge and judgment in everything appertaining to hunting, should have met with such a fate. But the news was soon confirmed, and a feeling of the deepest sorrow and regret prevailed amongst all classes. It was truly said at the time that to attempt any panegyric upon him would be superfluous, for his memory will remain as long as English sport and English literature flourish. His death was alluded to in the *Field* as follows: "Whyte-Melville, the kindly friend, the genial fellow sportsman, the hearty companion, the courteous, chivalrous gentleman. Whereever he lived he endeared himself; wherever he rode, he rode for the love of hunting, without selfishness, without jealousy. Out of the natural kindheartedness of a clever man grew the knack and habit, which at all times prompted him to say the right thing, the nice thing, to whomsoever he was thrown across. He has had imitators, disciples, rivals—most of them more or less successful—but he has never been superseded, never eclipsed." Before quitting the subject of his death, let me quote the following lines, which were originally composed for private circulation by Lord Rosslyn:

"The engineer by his own petard slain,
The eagle pierced by shaft from his own wing,
Are plaintive fancies, such as poets sing,
And touch the heart but coldly, through the brain.
But thou, dear George, in thine own sport thus ta'en,
In all the prime of manhood, and the swing
Of gallant gallop, struck stone dead! The thing
Appals, and petrifies, the mind with pain.
Bright, brave, and tender, Poesy's pet child;
Romance and history's love alike were thine;

Thy wit ne'er wounded, yet the contest won,
For at thy jests the gravest dullard smiled,
Last scion of an ancient Scottish line,
Whose old folks live to mourn their only son."

I have always contended that his riding and hunting abilities were equal to his literary abilities. This opinion has often been contradicted by people who do not understand Whyte-Melville's system of hunting. His motto was, "Do the thing handsomely, or let it alone"; and so, not being able to afford to have three hundred guineas beneath him, he was contented to see the fun of the fair without evincing the jealousy of the so-called first flight men. His horses were certainly not of the confidential sort. On one occasion he was asked, "How many animals are you master of this season?" and his reply was, "Not one, but I have four brutes in the stable that are masters of me." With a fine temper, nice hands, and a sympathy between himself and his horse that rarely has been equalled, he never irritated the animal he was riding, but would coax it into seemly behaviour by the use of his tongue. He used to talk to his horse, but one of his own lines can express his feelings better than any words of mine, viz., "Are you not a horse and a brother?"

Those who knew him will remember his favourite expression, "What d——d fools men are!" He had experienced the follies of youth, when as a subaltern he gambled at Crockford's, and could sympathise in late years with those who allowed the excitement of gambling to gain the victory over discretion. Indeed, it was his sympathy in every path of life which endeared

him so much to all whom he came across. He could even smile indulgently at the transgressions and foibles of people in the hunting-field, though on occasions he could be sarcastic, as when a hard funker once jumped a fence about three feet high, he wondered what the height would be after dinner. His warmest admirers would not call him a bold rider, and he did not hesitate to express his contempt for reckless horsemen and thrusting scoundrels. Yet few men knew the science of hunting better than he did. His father had been for many seasons Master of the Fife Foxhounds, and he had been entered to hounds as soon as he was out of the nursery. To the last moment of his life he cherished a strong affection for his native country, and if he had lived he would probably have succeeded Colonel Anstruther Thompson in the Mastership. But circumstances prevented his hunting much in the Fife country. After his marriage and retirement from the service he went to live at Boughton, some three miles from Northampton, in the Pytchley country, close to Holdenby House. Afterwards he moved to the V.W.H. country, and hunted regularly with the V.W.H. and Lord Rothschild's hounds in the Vale of Aylesbury, which he declared was the best hunting country in England. It is beyond my province to criticise his hunting literature, though, as a student of his writings, I may be allowed to say, that I never knew him to dip his pen in bitter ink. Nor do I know another author, who has given so much reading to the public, about which the same statement can be truthfully made. Like the majority of great writers, his modesty in all

matters appertaining to authorship was notorious, and he disliked to be congratulated upon his literary success. "My publisher dates the commencement of his ruin from our first interview," he said to Miss Strickland, the historian, when, with more zeal than discretion, she asked him about his financial success of his novels. The truth is, that, though Whyte-Melville was a poor man, he cared little for the financial success of his authorship, and for many years gave away the proceeds of his works in unostentatious charity. On one occasion he received a cheque for £1500 from his publishers, which he immediately posted to an old friend, whom he knew to be in want. In an age prone to pessimism, it is a happy thought that the good actions of such men as Whyte-Melville survive their lives.

MR. SURTEES

If Mr. Apperley sinned by being an egotist, as I have suggested in these pages, Mr. Surtees sinned by an excess of modesty, and he always had an objection to seeing his own name in print. Thus we know little of his life beyond the fact that he took himself for the model of Charley Stubbs in "Handley Cross." He has been described as very tall, but a good horseman, and, without ever riding for effect, he always managed to see a good deal of what hounds were doing. He was born and bred within hearing of Mr. Ralph Lambton and his famous foxhounds, and his first literary essays were accounts of their doings for the old *Sporting Magazine*, though in 1831 he published a work on which he brought to bear his education as a lawyer and his tastes as a sportsman. This work was called "The Horseman's Manual," and was a treatise on soundness, the law of warranty, and on the laws relating to horses. The book is now of little value, but at the time of its publication it caused Mr. Surtees to be recognised as an authority upon matters relating to a fox-hunting stable. Owing to the death of his elder brother, Anthony Surtees, on March 24, 1831, the financial position of the future famous novelist was changed in a considerable degree, and in conjunction with Mr. Rudolph Ackerman he started the new Sporting Magazine, which he edited till 1836. Immediately after his brother's death, in July 1831, he began to

develop the humorous character of the immortal Mr. Jorrocks. The papers of Surtees were published in volume form as "Jorrocks' Jaunts" in 1838, but, though the name of the author did not appear, his identity could not be concealed. He was recognised as "The Yorkshireman" in connection with the doings of Mr. Jorrocks, and we have a better description of his life at this time in "Handley Cross," when he portrayed himself in the character of Charley Stubbs. As a man about town, as a lawyer not caring for practice, and as a north countryman with the instincts of a sportsman strong at heart, Mr. Surtees took a part in the jaunts and jollities of which his happy fancy made Jorrocks the hero. In other words, he played Horatio to Mr. Jorrocks Hamlet.

On March 5, 1838, by the death of his father, Mr. Surtees succeeded to the estate of Hamsterley Hall and the duties of a country gentleman. He became a J.P. for Durham, a major of the Durham Militia, and was High Sheriff for the county in 1856. He had severed his connection with the new Sporting Magazine, and devoted his literary abilities to fiction. "Handley Cross" immediately placed him on the highest pinnacle of fame. Whilst man wears leather breeches, and slow old duffers can be found to cast backwards, the author of Jorrocks and Pigg can never die.

The original of John Jorrocks has never been traced, so far as the novelist is concerned, though John Leech took his original from a coachman, whom he sketched in church. Mr. Surtees said of his hero:

"Although Mr. Jorrocks is a man of established reputation, we trust the readers in perusing his freaks will not be betrayed into a 'swell mob' sneer at the author for depicting the exploits of a jolly, free-and-easy, fox-hunting grocer. We admit that Mr. Jorrocks is 'wulgar,' but we would ask the reader to bear in mind the distinction between describing vulgar people and describing vulgar people vulgarly. Mr. Jorrocks, at all events, has one recommendation; he does not pretend to be anything but what he is." That "Handley Cross" was, and is, vulgar, and occasionally even indelicate, admits of little doubt; but, though the very refined critics were, and are, calling out about the vulgarity, the slang, the smoke, the loudness of such writings, yet they are always willing to laugh. Mr. Surtees was a satirist and a humorist, and was helped in the production of his works by the first caricaturist of the nineteenth century, viz., Mr. John Leech. No wonder that fresh editions of these works are being called for by the reading public every year!

It seems an anomaly that a man possessing such a fund of humour "on paper" should have been taciturn in private life. Yet Mr. Surtees was not only a taciturn observer, but preferred solitude to company in the numerous excursions which he made about the country. We cannot obscure the fact, however much we may admire the author, that Mr. Surtees neither cared for society, nor did society care for him. Satirists are seldom popular, even when they confine their satire within the limits prescribed by the usages of society;

but Mr. Surtees went further. With the single exception of Jorrocks, all his characters were depicted from life, and there is an absence of gentlemanly qualities in all of them. It was his object to expose the vulgarities and trickery of the sporting world of the period. No man ever hunted with Jorrocks, or Sir Harry Scattercash, or Lord Scamperdale, Jack Spraggon, Soapey Sponge, and Jawleyford, of Jawleyford Court, with numerous other eccentricities impossible in real life. They are, and were, meant to be caricatures, but they were caricatures of living people easily recognisable. The delineation of character is always amusing, sometimes clever, but seldom true; but, further, it is doubtful whether, if the coarseness of the text had not been redeemed by the pencil and mind of such a finished and popular artist as John Leech, these books could have attained their present popularity.

It is a curious fact that Mr. John Leech, to whom he was mainly indebted for his popularity, should have died within a year of his own death. I have come across an old obituary notice of Mr. Leech, in which, referring to the works of Mr. Surtees, the writer says, "They owe a short-lived popularity to the wit of the writer, and would doubtless have shared the fate of thousands of ephemeral productions about equally meritorious; but they have been rescued from oblivion by the pencil of Leech, and have created a sensation due to nothing but the impression which the illustrations have created." This is a stern criticism, and I have yet to learn where "the thousands of ephemeral

productions about equally meritorious" are to be found. The fact remains that Mr. Surtees is known to posterity as a leader in his own style of sporting literature, and transcribed to paper his observations of men and manners in the hunting-field with a wit and satire that have never been surpassed.

CHAPTER VII

THE HUNTSMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Duties of the Master—Difficulties of the huntsman—Interfering Masters—The huntsman in the Master's absence—Motor-cars and cycles—Intimacy with the hounds—Born huntsmen—Masters who quarrel with the Hunt servants—Modern fashion of Masters hunting their own hounds—The huntsman and his whipper-in—Pay of huntsmen—Testimonials and tips—Perquisites

THE OPINIONS OF JOHN SCOTT

(Late Huntsman of The Albrighton Hounds)

COMMENTATED BY GEORGE F. UNDERHILL

THE success of a Hunting establishment depends to a very great extent upon the mutual understanding which should exist between the Master and his Hunt servants. Evident, as must be the truth of this proposition, it is notorious that Hunting establishments have been brought into a state bordering on chaos owing to disagreements between the Master and the huntsman. The ordinary follower of hounds cannot be expected to know the relationship which exists between the Master and his huntsman any more than the relationship which exists between the huntsman and his whippers-in. In order that I might understand this relationship, and be able to

explain it to my readers, I asked my old acquaintance, John Scott, late huntsman of the Albrighton Hounds, to spend a day with me in the Albrighton country. I wanted him to write this chapter, but he retorted that he was no "literary man." This was not the strict truth, as his letters to me prove. However, I was only too glad to obtain his opinions and information. My chief regret is that I cannot reproduce them in the same hearty virile language in which he expressed them to me.

The duty of the Master is to keep the field in order; the duty of the huntsman is to kill a fox. In regard to this axiom Scott was most emphatic. If the Master interferes with the huntsman when hounds check, more especially on a cold scenting day, the probability is that the fox will save his brush. Let us consider the following case, which is far from being uncommon: Hounds are at fault, and the huntsman is convinced that his fox is "forrad." He tells his whipper-in to get "forrad" quietly, while he casts his hounds "forrad," letting them hunt every yard of the ground. The Master, however, disapproves of the cast, and commences to blow his horn. The huntsman may pretend to be deaf, but the hounds have not been educated to simulate a sudden want of hearing. To them the sound of the horn is a word of command, which they must obey, though they may be on the point of scenting out the line of a hunted fox. In certain instances the whipper-in has actually signalled that he has viewed the fox, and the huntsman has lifted the hounds towards him, when the Master, ignorant of

what is happening, blows his horn. I do not think that the huntsman can be blamed if he fails to hear his Master's horn, but then a large proportion of the field has heard the Master's horn. The result is, that, if hounds hit off the line of their fox without much delay, the Master and those of his followers, who have misplaced their confidence in him, are left behind to flounder along with the forlorn hope of seeing hounds in the far distance.

Then follow the trials of the huntsman. He has hunted and killed his fox in spite of the interference of the Master, who will speak to him subsequently in lurid language. But the huntsman takes no notice of the lurid language, for he knows that the more a man barks the less likely will he be to bite. Unwittingly, however, he has offended the members of the Hunt, who were left behind with the Master, and he will be accused of stealing away with his fox without giving due notice to the field. Let us consider for a moment the Master, who,

> "Making desperate play through some fine muddy lanes,
> And by nicking and skirting got in for his pains."

He does not pretend to be a first-flight man. Often he has not the nerve to jump even a sheep-hurdle. But he holds a high social position in the county, and, though he may be an indifferent horseman, is a good sportsman. His ambition is to give his neighbours the best sport which it is within his power to give them. The farmers respect him and accordingly preserve foxes for him. He has a pleasant word for everybody at covert-side. He never utters a rebuke unless he has

just cause; but, though the rebuke may be spoken in the mildest language, the delinquent remembers it, and takes good care not to offend again. Such a Master rarely interferes with his huntsman while hounds are hunting, unless hounds run out of their own country and then check, or, what is a worse dilemma, the hunted fox goes to ground in a neighbouring country. In such cases, if the Master does not happen to be on the spot to issue instructions, the position of the huntsman is one of grave responsibility. The hard-riding division clamour that they should cast for their fox or dig him out. The latter practice is now admitted to be a distinct breach of Hunting etiquette, which would cause serious friction between two neighbouring Hunts; but the temptation to make one short cast is often too great to be resisted.

"Gentlemen, we have lost our fox, and must hark back into our own country." Such ought to be the mandate of the huntsman in the absence of the Master, though I have known a huntsman to be blamed for giving this order, and, in spite of persuasive tongues, insisting on its being enforced. On the occasion to which I refer, we had run some four or five miles out of our own country, when hounds were at fault. The Master was not up, so the sole responsibility rested with the huntsman, who gave the order quoted. Nor do I see that he had any alternative, unless he transgressed the orthodoxy of sport. However, the occupier of the land, where we lost our fox, heard of the occurrence, and was annoyed that our huntsman should have acted up to the strict letter of Hunting etiquette. I

admire the sportsmanlike generosity of the occupier of the land, but he should have remembered that the professional huntsman has to play the strict rules of the game.

The majority of the Masters of Hounds who employ professional Huntsmen are hard riders and are generally sufficiently forward to be able to note what hounds are doing, or I should rather say what the pack is doing. But it is only the huntsman, or a whipper-in, who knows what each individual hound is doing. Now hounds, like men and horses, have their stale days as well as their keen days, and it requires an expert, who knows the special characteristics of each hound in the pack, to distinguish during a run between the stale hounds and the keen hounds. During the journey from the kennels to the meet, the huntsman has had the opportunity of judging what individual hounds are likely to distinguish themselves during the day, and *a fortiori* what hounds he can depend upon in the event of a check. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the Master has not had this opportunity, but has driven to the hunting-fixture in his dog-cart or his motor-car. Ghosts of our grandfathers! What would Mr. Assheton Smith have said if he had seen an M.F.H. driving up to the meet on a motor-car? Motor-cars and cycles in the hunting-field are as obnoxious to the Hunt servants as they are to the farmers. What with kicking horses, careless riders, and carriages, the lot of the huntsman at the meet has never been a happy one. If you add to his anxiety by inflicting upon him the terrors caused by "cads on castors," then you must

not expect him to be always in an angelic humour. Besides, there is another point to consider. Hounds are both nervous and inquisitive creatures, and should not be alarmed or rendered unduly curious at the start of their day's work. Presumably it is the duty of the professional huntsman to bring his hounds to the meet in fit hunting condition; but it is more than sufficient to make him lose all heart in his work when he sees his pack frightened and scattered by an ignorant set of cyclists and motorists.

Fancy the effect of a runaway motor-car dashing into a pack of hounds! *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.* I rarely read a paper dealing with field sports but I come across some letter from a motorist, defending the existence of motor-cars, and I am constantly told that the motor-car has come to stop, which is exactly what I wish that it would do when hounds are in the vicinity.

However, it is time that we left the meet and proceeded to the management of hounds in the field. Now, no man, be he a professional or an amateur huntsman, can manage a pack unless he is on speaking terms with each hound. Most of my readers will recognise the following quotation from the journal of John Jorrocks, written immediately after he had accepted the Mastership of the Handley Cross Hounds, when he had paid his second visit to the kennels. "'Ounds all delighted to see me: stood up in my stirrups lookin' over the rails, 'olloain', cheerin', and talkin' to them. Yoicks Dexterous! Yoicks Lucky-lass! Yoicks Rallywood! Good dog! Threw bits of biscuit, as near each of them as I could pitch them,

callin' the 'ounds by name to let them see I knew them." How many modern Masters of Hounds imitate the example of the immortal grocer. Chatting with Scott about a certain M.F.H. I said, "But surely he knows something of kennel-lore!" And Scott replied, "He don't even know the names of his own hounds."

To a huntsman, as to a poet, we may apply the motto, *nascitur, non fit.* There have not been many Masters of Hounds who were born huntsmen. To be a huntsman you must possess the confidence and the obedience of your hounds. Nature must have endowed you with a magnetic influence over dumb animals. So far as I am aware, no reliable scientific explanation has ever been given of this magnetic influence. Why should Herr Seeth, like a modern Daniel, be able to walk about with impunity in a lions' den? Why was it that the young apprentice, Herbert Jones, was the only jockey who could ride Diamond Jubilee, or that Mr. E. P. Wilson was the only rider who could steer Roquefort across a country? Why, *cæteris paribus,* should hounds obey one man more than another? Masters of Hounds are too prone to ignore the last question. They forget that no man could possibly rise to the position of a professional huntsman unless he had proved, during the days of his stable and kennel boyhood, that there was a mutual affection between him and hounds. There can be no doubt but that to a large extent this magnetic influence is hereditary, though, of course, early associations have much to do with it. Still, the fact remains that the children of hunts-

men take to the kennels like ducklings take to water, though they know the hard side of a huntsman's life.

I remember that when I was a boy I used to think that a huntsman's life must be a bed of roses, and I am sure that many adult followers of hounds, and even a few Masters, hold the same opinion now. At all events, they behave as if they did, and seem to forget that the obedience of hounds is the result of incessant kennel work. Then the Master generally obtains the greater share of the credit due for the efficiency of the pack, though he may seldom enter his own kennels. Now, in the latter case, it is not pleasant for the huntsman to hear a stranger congratulating the Master upon the appearance of the hounds, and the Master accepting the praise unblushingly, as if he had earned it. These congratulations generally take place as we are moving off to draw our first covert, and may upset a huntsman's temper for the whole day.

This, however, is a minor trial in comparison with the active interference of the Master in the field while hounds are hunting. But the Master is not always to be blamed alone for this interference. There are some men who are always volunteering their advice. They know from experience that the huntsman will pay no attention to them, and so they inflict their opinions upon the Master, who is sometimes foolish enough to listen to them, especially if they happen to coincide with his own. I have now in my mind's eye one of these gentlemen, who, considering the number of seasons he has hunted, has spoilt more runs than any man I know. This is a strong thing to say, considering

the large number of men who are continually spoiling sport without being conscious of it. This man is a striking instance of the proverb that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. He understands something, not very much, about making a cast, and always wishes to parade this knowledge for the benefit of the Master, while it seems to be part of his creed to disagree with the huntsman, or, at all events, never to admit that the huntsman has been right. Of course, he is the oracle of the local club smoking-room, and it is not surprising that some of his criticisms reach the ears of the huntsman, who, like a sensible man, merely laughs at them with good-natured contempt, as do the majority of his listeners. Let him criticise to his heart's content in smoking-rooms so long as he cuts his cackle in the hunting-field.

It may be argued that, if it were not for the foolish indulgence of the Master, such men could cause no mischief; but some Masters consider themselves bound to respect the opinions of their followers even in such a matter as making a cast. Other Masters will snub a man severely if he ventures to make the slighest suggestion, and will even express anger with their huntsman before the whole field if a fox happens to beat hounds. For the latter practice there can be no excuse; nor is it the action of a gentleman. Certainly there have been huntsmen with the courage to retaliate at the risk of losing their places; but, even when the storm has cleared, the proceedings can hardly be regarded as dignified or redounding to the credit of the Hunt. Masters must

also remember that they have a character to maintain amongst Hunt servants, who are not to be found at a moment's notice. The efficient servants, be they huntsmen or whippers-in, are seldom out of a billet until they place themselves upon the retired list. If a Master once earns the reputation of quarrelling with his Hunt servants, he may as well resign his M.F.H. honours and retire into private life.

An accusation has been brought against the professional huntsmen that they overrate their influence and ability in the hunting-field, as a result of which, to a large extent, we have more than fifty gentlemen in England hunting their own foxhounds with the aid of a kennel huntsman. Naturally, huntsmen hate this modern fashion. It is not to be expected that a man who has carried the horn for over twenty seasons with the approval of his Masters and the members of the the Hunt will consent to be relegated to the inferior position of kennel huntsman and first whipper-in, even though the wages be the same. It is tantamount to depriving a soldier of his commission and sending him back to the ranks. Besides, few men on the wrong side of fifty could perform the duties of a first whipper-in, who must be a light-weight. During the day his horse has to do twice as much work as the horse of the huntsman, while in all probability the huntsman will be the better mounted of the two. However, this is not the place to discuss the duties of a whipper-in. It is sufficient to state that no man, with any self-respect, who has carried the horn would undertake those duties.

Upon one point Scott was most emphatic. His exact words were: "I always believed in making friends of my whippers-in." In this respect he differed entirely from Tom Firr, of whom Alfred Earp, his whipper-in for twenty-four seasons, wrote: "He was a very reserved man, and spoke little to his men; in fact, it might seem strange that outwardly he made very little more of me in the last week that I was with him than he did in the first." But there is a medium between a cold reserve and the familiarity which breeds contempt. This medium Scott discovered and acted upon. And I doubt if any huntsman was ever more willingly served by his men. They became infected with his own enthusiasm to kill a fox, with the result that it was seldom due to any fault of a whipper-in if a fox did manage to save his brush. To this trait in his character Masters owed much of the sport which they were able to show to their followers. Again, he was always willing to give his men the benefit of his knowledge in regard to kennel-lore. He told me that few things gave him more pleasure than to hear of one of his old men rising in the world of Hunt servants, and added with pride that there was only one who had disappointed him. Now the huntsman who works like Scott increases the reputation both of the Master and the Hunt. But will the modern huntsman take the trouble to do the work, in view of the constant changes of Mastership and the chance that a new Master may elect to hunt the hounds himself? This last question is not peculiar to the hunting-field. The conscientious worker, whether he be a

Cabinet Minister or a stable-lad, works with the laudable ambition of obtaining distinction in the future. If you deprive your Hunt servants of the chance of obtaining promotion, you will not get the proper class of boys to enter hunting-stables, and you will have to search for your recruits in the yards of fifth-rate livery-stable keepers.

" Doubt not thou, brave boy, I'll stand
To-day, for thee?"

But it is imperative that Masters of Hounds should hold out more encouragement to lads to enter their establishments than are afforded at the present time. The Master of Hounds may retort that he is practically the servant of a Hunt Committee, and that his first obligation is to study the prejudices of the influential members of the Hunt Committee. But what percentage of truth is there in this retort? The people whom the Master has to please are the large covert owners and the tenant-farmers, so far as sport is concerned, though the Hunt Committee may arrange the financial details of the Hunt.

Huntsmen complain that they are underpaid, considering the work which they have to do in all sorts of weather; but in regard to this complaint, Scott did not wish to speak at length, as, upon his retirement, he had received a monetary testimonial from the followers of the Albrighton Hounds. Tom Firr, on his compulsory retirement after the fateful morning of October 18, 1898, when he fell on his head, through his horse pecking on landing over a stone wall in the

course of a run from Chorley Wood, was presented with a cheque for £3200 by three hundred and eighty subscribers, foremost of whom was the King, then Prince of Wales; others were the Dukes of Beaufort, Rutland, Portland, and Somerset; the Duchesses of Newcastle and Sutherland; the Bishop of Peterborough; Lords Belper, Dudley, Essex, Lonsdale, Harrington, Kenyon, Edward Manners, Crawshaw, Newark, W. Bentinck, H. Bentinck, Percy St. Maur, Trevor, Henry Vane Tempest; Sir Gilbert Greenall, and a host of notabilities in the world of sport, all of whom responded to Mr. J. D. Craddock's invitation. The presentation of the cheque, together with a large silver salver, was made by Lord Belper, chairman of the Quorn Hunt Committee, in the presence of a large assemblage, at Mr. E. H. Warner's house. This was the largest presentation ever made to a huntsman, and might be described as a pension. Of course, Scott's testimonial did not amount to much more than ten per cent. of this sum; but every subscriber knew Scott personally, while I doubt if fifty of Tom Firr's subscribers would have recognised him if they had met him in his ordinary clothes in the street. Now, a huntsman ought to be in such a sound financial position that he can afford to regard a testimonial as a remote contingency, like an unexpected legacy from a maiden aunt. Within a week of penning these lines, I was under the impression that his tips would enable a thrifty huntsman to live in clover during the declining period of his life, and that his salary was a mere bagatelle to him. The fact that I had formed a

wrong impression is of little moment; but it appears that many Masters of Hounds have formed the same wrong impression and think that the huntsman secures a large income out of the tips.

I am now going to ride over treacherous ground. If I fall, it will be my own fault. Scott never uttered a syllable to me against the generosity of the Albrighton hunting-men. On the contrary, he spoke in grateful terms of their generosity, and compared them favourably with the members of other Hunts. Now, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the perquisites of a huntsman do not amount to the same value as the perquisites of a fifth-rate gamekeeper, or, rather, those of a gamekeeper on a fifth-rate estate. Thus, a paper-money tip is an unknown quantity with the huntsman in the provinces. while half-sovereigns, themselves rare, are more common than sovereigns. Certainly, I have not heard of any case where a man has had the imprudence or ignorance to offer a huntsman silver money. Now, excepting the three recognised tips—namely, a sovereign to a huntsman for the brush, half a sovereign to the first whipper-in for the mask, and five shillings to the second whipper-in for a pad—there is no necessity for a follower of hounds to tip the Hunt servants. If I give a head-gamekeeper a ten-pound note, I expect to be placed in the best position in the drive; but, if I were to give a huntsman a thousand pounds, he could not place me in the first flight; and, even if he could, he could not guarantee that I should maintain the position. At all events, he would be very foolish if he made a bet on the result. Still, there are many other ways in which

the Hunt servants can place followers of hounds under an obligation to them, though hunting-men very often fail to recognise the obligation. If Masters of Hounds knew of this failure, there would not be so much grumbling about wages amongst Hunt servants, but Masters and Hunt Committees labour under the delusion that the huntsman is making a fortune out of the tips.

Now, I hold no brief for advocating the grievances of professional huntsmen against Masters of Hounds. Moreover, in this chapter, I am only editing the opinions of an ex-huntsman, loyal to his old Masters, though his ideas in regard to the new school of gentlemen, who fancy that they can hunt their own hounds, would hardly be considered complimentary by the aforesaid new school.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MASTERSHIP OF STAGHOUNDS

Lord Coventry—The wild red deer—The Rev. John Russell—Exmoor—The Devon and Somerset—Sir John Amory's—Mr. Bisset—Mr. Sanders—Mr. Stanley—The Quantocks—Kindness of Masters—The uncarted deer—Mr. Stratton—Abolition of the Royal Buckhounds—Their history—Lord Ribblesdale's view—Charles Davis—Dick Christian on thoroughbreds—Lord Ribblesdale on hunting dress—On the Master in the field—And on ladies in the field

AFTER much thought, and after seeking advice of sportsmen who are competent from experience to give their opinions on stag-hunting in regard to both its branches, I have come to the conclusion that this chapter should be divided into two sections. In the first section I propose to discuss the pursuit of the wild red deer on Exmoor and the Quantocks, and in the second section to discuss riding after the uncarted deer. Both sports come under the definition of Stag-hunting, though the two sports are dissimilar in many respects, and require different qualifications, so far as Mastership is concerned.

"*Trahit sua quemque voluptas.*"

I do not intend to draw any comparisons between

From a photograph by Scott, Exeter

MR. R. A. SANDERS

MASTER OF THE DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS

PLATE VIII

the two branches of sport. Technically, the pursuit of the tame stag is not sport, if we accept the definition that sport consists in killing a wild animal by recognised legitimate methods, such as are recognised in the pursuit of the fox.

Lord Coventry hunted the Royal Buckhounds and the Croome Foxhounds in Worcestershire simultaneously, and also found time to attend Cross-Country Race Meetings, such as Dunstall Park, from which he was rarely an absentee. Thus, in his own person, Lord Coventry is a living proof of the catholicism of sport. With such an example before us it would be a *reductio ad absurdum* to contrast in any inimical spirit the two branches of stag-hunting.

THE WILD RED DEER

Even such an enthusiastic Master of Foxhounds as the late Duke of Beaufort has declared that few things can compare with a run after a "warrantable" stag at the stern of the Devon and Somerset Hounds, though he adds, with humorous satire, that there is probably nothing more difficult than to keep there. Exmoor is the home of the red deer, and, though zoologists have differed as to whether or not the red deer is indigenous to English soil, it has been proved that he has lived on Exmoor since the Norman Conquest, so that, if he came as a visitor, he must have liked his quarters.

It was during the Mastership of Mr. Fenwick Bisset, in the autumn of 1879, that I was initiated into the charms of following the Devon and Somerset Stag-

hounds on Exmoor. It was a memorable season, for our Master was a candidate for the Parliament which assembled on April 29, 1880, and his opponent was Mr. C. T. D. Acland, son of Sir Thomas Acland, who owned about twenty thousand acres of Exmoor, including the historic Dunkery Beacon and Cloutsam Ball, and whose family had been associated with Exmoor stag-hunting for over two centuries.

The earliest Master of Staghounds in the Exmoor country of whom I can find any authentic record was Hugh Pollard, Esquire, ranger of Queen Elizabeth for the Royal Forest of Exmoor in 1598, when he kept a pack of hounds at Simonsbath. From that period until about 1700 the Rangers of Exmoor Forest kept hounds; nor was it till 1775 that the hounds were kept by Colonel Bassett, of Watermouth, the first Master, who was neither a grantee of the Forest of Exmoor nor ranger; nor was it till 1802 that the pack became a subscription pack under the management of Mr. Worth, of Worth House, near Tiverton, Devon. In 1811 Lord Graves, of Bishop's Court, near Exeter, assumed command, only to be succeeded by Lord Fortescue in 1812, under whose rule the Rev. John Russell was initiated into the mysterious charms of stag-hunting. Lord Fortescue was the ideal Master of Hounds at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and many stories are told of the wassail, which rang merrily in the halls of Castle Hill, when it was the custom for James Tout, the huntsman, to enter the dining-room at Castle Hill after dinner in full costume, with his horn in his hand, and after he had sounded a

mort, "Success to Stag-hunting" was solemnly drunk by the assembled company in port-wine. Then Tout retired to his own place. "Nimrod," in the *Sporting Magazine*, October and November 1824, gives a coarse description of this habit of drinking stag-hunting, which, I am sorry to say, has been quoted in various books on hunting. "Nimrod" only paid one visit to the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, namely, in 1824, when he appears to have sought information in the tap-rooms of the village ale-houses. In the November number of the *Sporting Magazine*, 1824, he writes at the conclusion of one of his usual egoistical letters to that journal: "In my Western excursion I was absent from home just twenty days." He also states, "Devonshire is certainly the worst hunting country I ever was in; yet, strange to say, there are more hounds kept in it than in any other three counties in England." Apparently the chaos of hill, vale, wood, water, tors, precipices, and cataracts, all promiscuously hurled together, as it were, in Nature's wildest mood, did not appeal to the journalist.

But, except to the students of ancient hunting history, the writings of Nimrod are of no interest. Nor do they concern our present subject, namely, the Mastership of Staghounds. They constitute, however, a grave libel on the sporting geography of Devon and Somerset, which it is necessary to contradict. How can a man, with the experience of twenty days, give reliable evidence of a sport of which he had no previous knowledge? However, the statement of the late Duke of Beaufort, to which I have already alluded, is one

strong contradiction; and, if another contradiction were needed, we find it in the openly expressed opinions of our present King; while a third contradiction will be found in the life of the Rev. John Russell.

"Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

The Rev. John Russell, dating his entry from 1814 with constant attendance, season after season, for a period of sixty-four years, can claim a longer experience of Exmoor stag-hunting than any other gentleman who had made his name famous in hunting history. Certainly, either with staghounds or with foxhounds, no man hunting in the same country could have seen more dynasties of Mastership. In 1812 Lord Fortescue became Master of the Staghounds for the second time, but resigned the Mastership in 1818, having killed during his six years of office forty-two stags and forty-eight hinds. Mr. Stuckley Lucas, of Barons Down, then took office for another six years, namely, till 1825, during which year the pack was sold at Tattersall's to a German baron. But in 1827 Sir Arthur Chichester, of Youlstone, brought a pack into the field and revived the sport according to the rules of hunting etiquette. Sir Arthur resigned in 1833. From 1837 to 1842 a committee was supposed to hunt the country, but the moving spirit of the committee was Mr. Charles Palk Collyns, of Dulverton, the Nestor of Exmoor, who chronicled the runs from 1816 till 1860. From 1842 till 1847 the country was hunted by the Hon. Newton Fellowes. Then Sir Arthur Chichester was Master for

one season, after which he was succeeded by Mr. George Luxton, of Winkleigh. Captain West succeeded Mr. Luxton, and was followed by Mr. Tom Carew, of Collipriest, who resigned in 1853. For a short time Captain West stopped the gap. Then in 1855 Mr. Fenwick Bisset assumed command of the famous pack—

> "Over some wide water'd shore
> Swinging slow with sudden roar."

After 1860, Mr. Boyce, of Withypoole, became the chronicler of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds; but I am not aware that his chronicles were ever published in volume form. If they were so published, it must have been only for private circulation. The chronicles of Mr. Charles Palk Collyns were published in volume form in 1862 by Messrs. Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, and, if only for the excellence of the illustrations, most of which are tinted photo-lithographs, are worthy of a place on the shelves of a sportsman's library.

When the Rev. John Russell kept a pack of fox-hounds at Hatherleigh in 1826, within a short distance of which place the Rev. W. H. Karslake, of Dolton, kept harriers, while the Rev. Peter Glub was also hunting foxes in the district, he received the following letter :—

"HONOR'D SIR,—Do ee plaise bring up the dogs first chance; us a got a fine litter, sure enough, up to Hollacomb Bucks. They'm up full growed a month agone; and last night was a week, what must em do

but kill Mistess' old gander and seven more wi un—her's most gone mazed owing to't—so do ee plaise come up Sir and gi 'em a rattle—they'm rale beauties, they em, as ever you clapped your eyes on."

Volumes could not tell us more than this letter tells us of the views with which hunting was regarded by the tillers and occupiers of the soil in Devon and Somerset during the first half of the nineteenth century. Nor did these views change during the close of the nineteenth century, as I can testify from personal experience. When I first lived at Porlock, which may be regarded as the central point of the Devon and Somerset country, and during my walks abroad, exchanged greetings with the native agriculturists, invariably the reply was, "Fine day for hunting." As a rule, during my country strolls, I open the conversation with the native agriculturist by inquiring about harvest prospects, but I discovered at Porlock that the popular question to ask was, "How many 'warrantable' stags have you seen lately?" For a Master of Hounds this Devon and Somerset country should have been an ideal Utopia. The large landowners, such as Sir Thomas Acland; Mr. Knight, of Simonsbath; Mr. Nicholas Snow, Master of "The Stars of the West"; the Luttrell family of Dunster Castle; and Sir Arthur Chichester, were, without exception, staunch supporters of sport.

As a rule, it is foolish to inquire whence venison cometh—

> "For if by chance it stolen be,
> A good belief sufficeth thee."

From a photograph by Bassano's, Ltd.

MR. E. A. V. STANLEY

MASTER OF THE QUANTOCK, DEVON

PLATE IX

But in the West you must not only know whence your venison cometh, but on what day the *mort* was sounded over him.

But there is a vast difference between 1879 and 1903. In addition to the old-established pack, now under the Mastership of Mr. R. A. Sanders, we have Sir John Amory's, kennelled at Tiverton; the Barnstaple Hounds, under the joint Mastership of Captain Paterson and Mr. A. Clarke, with kennels at Brinsworthy, near Barnstaple; and the Quantocks, over which Mr. E. A. V. Stanley presides and acts as his own huntsman. Moreover, the farmers say that they want and must have more hunting, owing to the extent to which the stags have increased and multiplied. Now, the damage caused by a fox is infinitesimal in comparison with the damage which can be caused by a stag before the harvest is in. Besides, it is easy to compensate the small farmer for the loss of a few turkeys or fowls, but it is difficult to assess the damage caused to a field of standing corn.

I have already referred to Mr. Bisset, to whom modern stag-hunting on Exmoor may to a certain large extent be regarded as a monument. I should like to add a few words about him in his capacity of a Master of Hounds. "Mention his name," says Mr. Fortescue, "to any of the yeomen or farmers, who knew him in the stag-hunting district, and they will say, 'Mr. Bisset—ah, he was a good gentleman.'" Plain words, but what words could convey higher praise? Yet I doubt if Mr. Bisset was popular with the strangers in the field. These strangers might be divided into two

classes. There were the men who live for hunting, who used to hunt with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, until the country was stripped for business in the Shires; and there were the men who had chosen Porlock or some other centre in the Devon and Somerset country as the scene of their annual vacation or holiday. To whichever class he might belong Mr. Bisset treated the follower with courtesy so long as he kept his tongue within his mouth. But he would not brook the slightest interference. And he had two methods of dealing with interference. The one was to subject the interferer to a searching cross-examination *coram publico* on minute points; the other was to waive the interferer aside unceremoniously, as if his interference were not worthy of attention. I have referred to these characteristics of Mr. Bisset, because in a later portion of this chapter, Lord Ribblesdale, late M.B.H., has published his views of the conduct of a Master of Hounds in the field, especially in cases of impertinent interference.

Before concluding these remarks on the wild red deer of Devon and Somerset, I ought to state that I am indebted to Mr. R. A. Sanders, the Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, for his kindness in reading my MS. before it went to press, and to Mr. E. A. V. Stanley, the Master of the Quantock Staghounds, for his courteous letter, in which he writes: "I shall be delighted to help you in any way if you wanted any particulars of Red Deer on the Quantocks." I am afraid that there is no room in this volume for an essay on "Masters of Hounds: The criticisms of

Sporting Authors" ; but I wish to make this statement. When a Master of Hounds takes the trouble to advise and assist the sporting author, to send him his photograph, and to prove to him that he takes an interest in his work, then that work is a pleasure instead of being a toil. Knowing what many followers do not know, or, if they do know, do not realise the knowledge, what a busy man the Master of Hounds is who conscientiously performs his duties, I am at a loss to find words sufficiently emphatic in which to express my gratitude for the courtesy and kind assistance which I have received from gentlemen to whom I was a stranger. Anyhow, if it had not been for that courtesy and kind assistance, my contributions to this volume would never have been written.

THE TAME OR UNCARTED DEER

There have been so many controversies in regard to the pursuit of the uncarted deer, that I must confess that I feel diffident as to the proper method in which the sport should be impartially reviewed. The Rev. Joseph Stratton, who is the mouthpiece of the Humanitarian League, has on numerous occasions informed his limited circle of readers that the pursuit of a tame stag is a disgrace to manhood ; but the occupations and the aptitudes of Mr. Stratton do not permit him to possess any practical knowledge whatsoever of stag-hunting, though in a pamphlet published in 1897 he confesses that in his young days he was "somewhat partial to a fighting-cock." He defends himself for

this partiality under the plea that forty years ago animals' rights had not come up for settlement. Yet cock-fighting was illegal and practically extinct in 1840, fifty-seven years before Mr. Stratton penned his reply to Lord Ribblesdale's famous book, "The Queen's Hounds." It must be remembered that the mouthpiece of the Humanitarian League was not recognised as an authority in regard to the *polemics* of sport. On the contrary, he was an expert electioneering agent, who in 1892 had published the first petition for the abolition of the Royal Buckhounds. Unfortunately for Mr. Stratton and the other promoters of the agitation against the buckhounds, it transpired that the majority of the signatories to the petition were *employées* in Huntley and Palmer's Biscuit Works at Reading. In order to prove to these *employées* how ignorant they were, Lord Ribblesdale, on December 23, 1892, hunted an uncarted deer into the London Road, one of the central streets of Reading, where he was safely captured.

In the first place, I could never understand what relation there could be between hunting the uncarted deer and humanitarianism. If the pursuit of the uncarted deer were cruel, then the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should undertake the prosecution. Yet Mr. Stratton gravely tells us that "till the humanitarian eye became fixed on the Royal Hunt, it was the rule when a stag met with what the hunters call 'an accident,' in a serious shape, to kill and disembowel the animal and regale the pack then and there upon the entrails." I do not profess to

understand the humanitarian opinions of Mr. Stratton; but surely it is more humane to put a dumb animal out of its lingering torture than to allow it to remain in unspeakable anguish for hours! Let me quote one more statement from the extraordinary pamphlet of this misguided individual. He writes: "What about the Berks and Bucks farmers? Are they in favour of the Hunt? Certainly not. Yet they were exhorted by the landowners' daughters, scouring the country in their pony-carts, to sign the petition of our opponents, and, if they had not complied, they would have been marked men, and have suffered." When our present King abolished the Royal Buckhounds, why were the Berks and Bucks Staghounds started by Sir Robert Wilmot? They were started at the instigation of the farmers. The allusion to ladies in their pony-carts is merely a vulgar *canard*.

> "The good of other times let others state,
> I think it lucky I was born so late."

I must leave it to my readers to study the ancient history of the Royal Buckhounds, should the subject interest them. There was the Hereditary or Manorial Pack, founded in the reign of Edward III., under what may be termed the hereditary Mastership of the Brocas family, though some historians consider that Buck-hunting was a branch of the Royal Chase in the reign of Henry II. Be that as it may be, it is not till the reign of Edward III. that the pack is specifically mentioned: *Canum nostrarum clamorum vocatum buck hounde's*. Henry VIII. founded the Household or

Privy Pack in 1528, the first Master being George Boleyne, Viscount Rochester. It is a curious coincidence that George Boleyne was born at Hever Castle, in Kent, the former residence of Sir Oliver Brocas, when Edward III. started the hereditary pack.

Few people would regard George IV. as having been a keen sportsman, so far as field sports were concerned. Still, at all events, stag-hunters of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century owed much to George IV. He made Charles Davis Huntsman of the Royal Pack, who only relinquished the horn in 1867, having carried it for more than forty seasons. His retirement was but short, for he died at Ascot on October 26, 1867, of bronchitis, in his seventy-ninth year. Lord Ribblesdale has devoted an entire chapter to this remarkable Huntsman, beneath the inscription:

> "Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei
> Vitabit Libitinam."

Some of the sayings of Davis are worthy of repetition. Thus, writing of hounds, he says, "Speak not *harshly*, but kindly, and even *your countenance* must bear the impress of *friendship*." But there can be no doubt, as Lord Ribblesdale remarks, that he took himself a little too seriously. I could not help smiling when I read one sentence about him penned by Lord Ribblesdale—the italics are my own. "I feel confident that he was never in anything like a scrape—*this is of itself quite a misfortune*—and I question whether he ever had much to do with the scrapes and shifts of others." I have always thought that Charles Davis was an over-rated man; and

that he was a thorn in the side of the Master of the Buckhounds. He was exceptionally good-looking, as may be judged from the numerous portraits of him still in existence, and had what is commonly called "a marked personality." But there can be no doubt that he was a domineering man. However, somewhat to my surprise, Lord Ribblesdale has bestowed unstinted praise upon him. The reason for my surprise is that Charles Davis had a strong objection to ladies in the hunting-field, while, as will be seen from the remarks of Lord Ribblesdale published at the end of this chapter, his Lordship approves of ladies hunting. However, Charles Davis was one of the chief mainstays of the Royal Hunt for forty years, and has come down to posterity as a prominent figure in hunting history.

One of the great differences between riding after the uncarted deer and fox-hunting is that in the pursuit of your stag you are going the whole time, without any checks for "mending bellows," such as you get in fox-hunting. Also you are going at a very near approach to racing pace. The horse which will carry you safely over a cramped provincial fox-hunting country would be of little use with the Berks and Bucks Staghounds, as Lord Ribblesdale tells us in his history of the Royal pack.

"Thoroughbred horses, Dick Christian told the 'Druid,' make the very best of hunters; 'I never heard,' he declared, 'of a great thing, but it was done by a thoroughbred horse.' They certainly make the best stag-hunters, for only blood and quality, legs and feet, can stand the long distances, the long runs, and the

road work. Bucks is hilly, Berks is deep. A slow or underbred horse is soon blown, if not actually outpaced, by staghounds, and the more confidence you have in his jumping and his courage the greater the disaster when it comes. After twenty minutes you would not know the horse, poor devil! As he rolls and slobbers along, he would not know himself. Is this the animal that devoured the first four fields like a tiger, and jumped like an india-rubber ball? With the thoroughbred horse it is just the other way. He is often a bad beginner, but the farther he goes the better he goes. The first fence he all but fell from getting too near it; the second fence, not liking the look of some straggling thorns, he came round; the third fence, he left his hind legs. But, though annoyed or disappointed with him, you know he does not mean falling, and you wait his own good time. Now you have been going for the best part of an hour, the claims of high descent have asserted themselves, the best blood of a century is coursing and mantling through his veins, he swells the muscles of his neck and cracks his nostrils in patrician disdain of every difficulty: he is jumping bigger and bigger, galloping with the force of a steam-engine, collecting himself with the balance of a rope-dancer. You know what it is to be really carried."

It must be remembered that one of the most difficult things for persons in authority out stag-hunting is to know when to stop hounds and when to press a deer. Now, in fox-hunting, the hero of the day is the man who is first in at the death. In stag-hunting the hero

is the man who can most excel in his exertions to save life.

We know that modern Masters of Hounds hold strong opinions in regard to dress in the hunting-field, though I have always thought that the late Duke of Beaufort said all that there was to be said on the subject when he stated that it was the duty of a gentleman to dress as well as he could afford to dress. But the man who attempts to dress beyond his means only succeeds in looking like a painted popinjay. In the hunting-field it is not the tailor, but the valet, who makes the man. Here again I must quote from Lord Ribblesdale's book:

"*De rigueur* hunting dress must be very well done or not at all. Some excellent servants never learn to do leathers properly. It is at once an art and a craft. Tops, too, want an eye for colour. I am a stickler for the tall hat; it looks the best, and in every way is the best for riding of all kinds, which includes falling. A tall hat gives a little finish to horsemanship, which the wideawake can never hope to achieve. But, given the tall hat, properly put on box-cloth breeches and well-cleaned butcher-boots look a great deal better than the buckskins and tops of the single-handed or the parlour-maid."

I do not apologise for these quotations, since this chapter has been a division of labour, and I have now to append a double supplement from the pen of Lord Ribblesdale dealing with "The Master in the Field" and "Ladies in the Hunting Field."

Some of my readers may argue that these supple-

ments should have been inserted in other chapters; but the name of Lord Ribblesdale is so intimately connected with stag-hunting that I consider it to be the wiser plan to publish them in this chapter.

THE MASTER IN THE FIELD.

Masters should always be regarded as privileged people in the matter of finding fault, and the field should always be submissive and apologetic; but, for the Master's interference to be salutary, he must be a good judge of what to say and when to say it. As to the latter, it is a matter of recognising the right moment, whilst the former involves the sense of proportion and taste.

A satirical Master can often give pain to the young and foolish. Blasts and damns nobody minds; they keep the thing going, and agreeably mitigate the rigour of the game. The discomfiture of the individual receives and generally merits the approval of the field. On the other hand, he is thought none the worse of, as every one feels, "There, but for the grace of God, goeth John Jackson."

He cannot be everywhere: if he rides in front it's a hundred to one he's as anxious to be rather nearer hounds than anybody else, and his attention is fully occupied in getting there. If he rides behind there is still less to be done, as nobody accepts his Boanerges "Hold Hards" as applicable to himself. But when hounds are not running hard, he can keep his eyes on seeds and beans, and lambing ewes

at the end of the season, and can make use of a knowledge of agriculture, whether inherited or acquired, which is usually not at the disposal of the majority of his field. If he has a fast and handy horse he can also race for gates at critical moments, and, given that the fence on either side is anything of an ally, can do real good by drawing his horse across the gateway. This especially applies to a gate on to a road, where hounds on a moderate scent are sure to find themselves in some perplexity or other.

I have already said that the individual in a field must be passively obedient. If he gets into trouble, it is quite possible that he may not know how he has offended; but he should remember that nine times out of ten the Master uses him as a sort of dumping-ground for humours due to quite different causes, such as a stupid second horseman, a shooting-party at the Duke's which has obliged him to alter his fixtures for the next fortnight, a murrain amongst his cattle, or a sudden outbreak of measles in his nursery. It should be borne in mind, too, that a milk-white horse, fond of jumping, is certain to get him into a scrape.

A Master of Hounds should pay his local bills regularly and answer his business letters at once, get to know the farmers and gamekeepers, try to see something of both in the spring and summer time, and, however perplexed about what to do or not to do, let him pretend to have made up an adamantine mind.

LADIES IN THE HUNTING-FIELD.

The consideration of the advantages derived by the general public from ladies in the hunting-field appears to be an almost academic question—like motor-cars, they have come to stay—and there are many kinds of ladies with a diversity of gifts.

Personally I quite approve of them. The doughty deeds they now inspire may be prosaic, but at least they give practice in detaining heavy or in forcing open reluctant gates. Squeezing through after them also develops a certain agility; a bang on the knee being often the only guerdon of self-sacrificing chivalry.

On the other hand, it is only fair to say that beauty in distress is a much rarer object than in former days. Horses are better bitted, women ride better, and the prompt rectifications of the curb chain, so favourable to the hero of the Early Victorian novel, have practically ceased.

Thanks especially to Mr. Mayhew, of Seymour Street, there has been a great improvement in side-saddles. The formidable engines of five-and-twenty years ago have disappeared. The sore-back question is all but solved, and the lover dares now give his lady-love a mount. This means that horses are comfortable, and consequently carry their fair riders in an equable frame of mind. A horse uncomfortably saddled cannot be at his best; he becomes either fractious or dull. Better-

From a photograph by Mrs. Hughes

KEEN HORSEWOMEN

From a photograph by Mrs. Hughes

"OVER!"

PLATE X

fitting saddles carry corresponding advantages all round. You seldom now see Mr. A. off his horse in a muddy lane doing his frenzied best to make Mrs. B. and her favourite more comfortable. Safety habits and safety stirrups have reduced accidents to a minimum. To save the life of a lady dragged head downwards through a turnip-field is an opportunity which comes but rarely now. Some years ago a lady relative of mine, on finding herself in this predicament, tried to free herself from her flowing habit and imposing pommel by clutching at the turnips as she passed. At last one especially stanch swede achieved the object desired.

Hunting-ladies drop into two classes, marked by distinctive psychological and physical differences. There is what I would call the "industrious apprentice" hunting lady. She knows all about stable management and the price of forage, identifies a vixen with the tail of her eye, may be followed with confidence in a big wood, rides to the meet, knows the bridle-roads, and three or four times a season spends a Sunday afternoon on the flags. The other I will call the "lotus-eater." She will ride nothing but the best; likes long-tailed horses with plaited manes; drives in a brougham, or an American trotter, to the meet, rides home at an inspiring canter on a fresh horse kept out for the purpose, and devotes her evening to the care of her complexion, the repose of her person, a Paquin tea-gown and the infatuation of an admirer.

CHAPTER IX

SOME VIEWS OF A MASTER OF OTTERHOUNDS

Popularity of otter-hunting in Devon—New packs of otterhounds—Otter-hunting not an artificial sport—The miller—Value of his goodwill—Different views of otter-hunting—Friction between the Master and his committee—Troubles in the field, and troubles in kennel—The compensations—Essex and Suffolk—Farmers in the Cheriton country—Help from ladies—Proper treatment of hounds—Expenses—Hounds' food—Wages—Railway expenses—Total cost

By ARTHUR HEINEMANN

(Master and Huntsman of the Cheriton Otter Hunt and formerly of the Essex Otterhounds)

SOME think that spring and summer strew the otter-hunter's path with flowers, but, if the flowers be roses, I have generally, speaking from personal experience, found the thorns not far distant. As in paintings, the dark background throws up nearer beauties, so do the tribulations, more particularly those which beset him who would hunt otters in a country new to the sport—obstacles which he would never encounter in districts where the "sly goose-footed prowler" had been hunted from time immemorial—enhance his delight when he does get a good sporting day. In a new country, to

From a photograph by Hole, Minehead

MR. HEINEMANN WITH "SULTAN" AND "MONARCH"

PLATE XI

give only one instance, it is usual to make a great favour of allowing him to draw the rivers at all. On the contrary, in Devonshire people feel aggrieved if the pack does not pay their waters at least one visit every season to thin out the otters. Yet, whatever may be the Master's difficulties, it is a healthy sign, in these days of big fields, big purses, and bag foxes, to find otter-hunting the only hunting, bar that of the wild stag on Exmoor, which is still free from the taint of artificiality, ever gaining fresh adherents, as witness the presence this season of otterhounds in at least five of the home counties—Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Essex, and Suffolk.

The absence of artificiality is surely obvious. It is always possible to stock a country with hares or with foxes (and mange also) from Leadenhall Market, from the Highlands of Scotland, or—*O tempora, O mores!*—from the country of a provincial neighbour. It is possible to keep stags or hinds on hard food and enlarge or uncart them before the pack, perhaps only to retake the fugitive in some cowshed or pigsty. To stock an otter-hunting country with otters, however, is beyond any one, no matter how deep his purse or how great his indifference to the interests of his neighbours. He can only depend on the natural stock of otters fishing the rivers and brooks in the locality, their numbers constantly augmented from those born in the sea-cliffs and working up from the estuaries. He must also depend on the good-will of the owners of water, of riparian owners, that is to say, of millers, farmers, water-bailiffs, keepers, and fishermen. If I were asked

to say who of all these holds, in my opinion, the key to the situation, I should name the jolly miller. If he be the reverse of jolly, then the way to sport is barred. Whether travelling up-stream in his eager search for a mate, or intent on his fishing foray, sooner or later every otter finds his progress blocked and barred by some quaint old mill or more modern factory water-wheel, equally obstructive in its way. Nothing daunted, he lands and circumvents the obstacle, but to do this he must make such a *détour* as shall bring him back to the river above the impediment in question. Thus intent, he leaves his "seal" or "spur" on the muddy bank of the mill-head, indicating most plainly the points of ingress and egress, where, if so disposed, the trapper may set his deadly gin and capture every otter which passes that way, for the animal comes and goes fearlessly and without suspicion of mischief. As another case of dependence on the miller's favour, it may be mentioned that there is above every mill a stretch of deep water, in which, but for the friendly opening of the flood-gates, many an otter could with impunity laugh to scorn the best efforts of the hounds and huntsman. Often have I had occasion to feel grateful to the miller for such timely help; and I can give the novice no better advice on the subject than that he should cultivate the miller. Let him, while the pack is held up waiting for the water to be lowered, visit the miller's snug premises to "see the wheel work." The miller is to the otter-hunter what the head gamekeeper is to the fox-hunter, and let him not forget it. If there be a "Maid of the Mill," let the

Master remember her with the present of a pole or pad. There is an excellent song about a miller's daughter, but that enters into details that hardly come within the scope of this chapter. It is a far cry from Chelmsford to Weare Gifford, yet what better friend to otter-hunting does memory cherish than Mr. Martin, of How Street Mill, in the E.O.H. country, or than our good friend Mr. Fry, in the country hunted by the Cheriton!

Many are the disagreeables and the difficulties that lie in the path of one who would hunt and master a pack of otterhounds, two offices which are usually filled by one person. Many, also, are the compensating pleasures and privileges. As to the side on which the balance inclines, I withhold any pronounced opinion. The reader of this chapter may perhaps be able to judge for himself. *Les opinions ne sont que des points de vue*, the sound motto of *L'amie inconnue* in *The County Gentleman*, has a special application to otter-hunting; aud he who has enjoyed a good week's sport with his otterhounds—a pretty trail, a clever find, a rousing hunt, and, since *Finis coronat opus*, a kill at the end—may be stirred to the wildest pitch of enthusiasm. His neighbour, on the other hand, who has had nothing but long and weary walks, with no sign or sniff of an otter on his streams for weeks together, will not view the sport through roseate glasses, particularly as he knows all the while how good an account his hands would give of themselves if they but got the chance to display their patience in drawing, their cleverness in finding, and their dash, drive, and music once they had their

otter a-swim. The keynote of the Master's temperament, then, must be doggedness and perseverance, else he will infect with his own slackness the hounds, which reflect their huntsman's every mood.

It is with his committee that the Master's troubles will commence, and, having commenced, continue. Some one rude has called hunt committees an invention of the Evil One. If this be their source, they certainly do credit to his originality. With one member it is a question of "sour grapes"; with another of jealousy; with the third of personal antagonism; with a fourth of self-importance; while a fifth is imbued with complete ignorance of sport and its usages. Some Masters undoubtedly enjoy brighter experiences, and find a good sportsman or two on their committee to back them through thick and thin, but such unselfish supporters are sadly in the minority. The points of issue are innumerable. One member will raise objections to the Master advertising his meets. Another thinks that he wears out hounds by hunting too many days a week. A third has something to say about the way in which the whip behaves to him in the field. A fourth objects to the Master's drawing his stream unless he can be there in person. If these be not the chosen grounds of complaint, there are others as handy. Now the Master is blamed for burying dead hounds instead of boiling them into broth for the rest. This charge was actually once brought against myself. On another occasion, he is at fault in drafting some babbler or waster from the pack, in which some member of the committee happens to take a personal interest. All

criticise and find fault in field or in kennel, though it may safely be said that very few otter hunt committees really represent either the owners of water or the majority of the subscribers. Every rule, of course, has its exceptions, and my own personal experience has embraced every help and kindness from some members of some committees.

Then the Master has other troubles in kennel. These will arise out of such obligations as selecting and building proper kennels for the pack, seeing to *their* health and comfort as later they will see to *his* sport and enjoyment. The Master may proceed to his duties under a variety of conditions. In some cases, he may take a country and find a good pack ready to his hand. Or, again, he may buy an entire pack and then take a country for it to hunt. As a third case, he may take the country and find a lot of hounds in kennel, with no clue whatever as to their work. There is then nothing for it but "to find them out," often at the expense of time and temper and, indeed, of derision from carping critics. To make the pack an efficient one, he must add other hounds, rough or smooth as the case may be, and he must then enter them. This means first finding an otter, by no means a certainty even under the most likely conditions. Lastly, he has to weld these various elements into one homogeneous whole, a machine, in fact, that can be controlled by one man's voice, horn and gesture, and that man the Master himself. A single instance from my own memories may serve to illustrate some worries of an M.O.H. The Cheriton were in the middle of their

season, when anthrax broke out in a neighbouring kennel. This would not have affected the otterhounds, which were kennelled a couple of miles away, only my man had been to the infected kennels for a couple of buckets of flesh. Fortunately, thanks to prompt measures being taken, this flesh was not given to the hounds, but was buried in quicklime instead. Yet for a week or two, like a very sword of Damocles, the menace of quarantine, of confinement to kennels, of the deduction of two or three months from an all too short summer "when water permits," hung over our heads.

The difficulties in the field are many and distracting. At the head of them I should be inclined to put apathy. The intending Master will receive some few replies to his hopeful letters calculated to cool the bravest enthusiasm. I remember one Essex man who wrote that "they did not take much interest in otter-hunting in their neighbourhood." Another, in Surrey, considered the presence of hounds in summer "a most improper proceeding!" A third, a Hertfordshire sportsman, wrote thus: "We go in for trout-fishing and cannot possibly allow an otter to exist on our waters!" Another Essex landowner objected in these terms: "I cannot allow hounds to draw my river at any time. My coverts adjoin it, and I rear pheasants. But for all this, I consider myself a sportsman." This kind of thing filled four pages. I have had one river closed to me for pheasants, a second because of nesting partridges, a third for ducks, and a fourth for swans! As a visitor once remarked: "They have to whip off every mile or

From a photograph by Hole, Minehead

THE CHERITON PACK, 1903, AND A. BROXTON

PLATE XII

so because a cock-pheasant is sitting on eggs!" Once I was refused leave to draw because the owner had a rook-shooting party, though if he had not, he would not have been out hunting with us. At another place preparations for sheep-washing necessitated the damming of a river and thus spoilt a likely find. Perhaps, however, the worst case of all was one that befell me on the Essex Blackwater. The owner, or rather occupier, of Stisted actually walked along with us for some time before ordering hounds off, which he eventually did in anything but courteous language. This was the more distressing to some sixty followers who had been on the tramp the whole day, because he chose his time when hounds were fast drawing on to their otter.

Every cloud, however, has its silver lining. There are many good sportsmen in East Anglia, in the North country, and in the West, who readily assist the packs of otterhounds drawing streams and rivers in their neighbourhood. From such as these I have experienced the kindest and most hospitable of welcomes: hounds and men quartered for the visit, and, particularly in Suffolk, the best of port passed round with no sparing hand. One kind friend even had laid out in my bedroom a tankard of beer, a decanter of brandy and three large sodas, besides fruit in variety; and I have always hoped that his disappointment was not great on finding that I had no use of any such refreshment, for nothing could diminish the grateful memory of his hospitality. Another good friend to otter-hunting, a miller in the Colchester country, hired a couple of horses and vanned the pack in his miller's waggon to a distant fixture

rather than let them go the ten miles by road. There was even a miller on the Blackwater who gladly suffered the otters to take his ducklings, and who always had an *al fresco* lunch ready for us when we passed by. Hospitality and good fellowship follow a pack of otter-hounds, which may be partly accounted for by the fact of there being more time for social amenities than in some other kinds of hunting. You can talk to Tom or Jack as you walk along and watch hounds draw. When you come to the local magnate, you can have hounds held up or steadied while you pass the time of day, and this without in any way interfering with sport, for *until* hounds have found your time is your own. Once with the Culmstock, and once again with the Essex, I saw hounds stopped while the Master effusively thanked a gesticulating individual on the further bank. In the one case thanks were rendered for leave to draw; in the other for the offer of refreshment. Yet in both instances there seems to have been some misunderstanding, for it afterwards transpired that both were in reality foaming with rage and warning hounds off. It is to be hoped that they had a saving sense of humour to enable them to appreciate the situation.

But there were, and no doubt there still are, a capital lot of farmers in Essex and Suffolk, and every now and then one would come across an exiled west-countryman, who had in the days of his youth followed Collier or Cheriton. The hospitality of Littlebury Mill, on the Roding, seemed nothing short of inexhaustible. "There are fish enough for me," said the right good owner, "and fish enough for the otters as well. And,

gentlemen, I am very pleased to see you all here to-day." Of the farmers in the Cheriton country I cannot speak too highly. I have never had an unpleasant word with one of them. The little instances of timely kindness are innumerable everywhere. One day in Suffolk, for instance, on the Stour, a river full of otters, but in many parts far too heavy to hunt with any chance of success, a dear old man produced a lemon, which he insisted on my sucking to quench my thirst, he said, and help my voice. Another well-wisher in Devonshire was in the habit of bringing me out lunch in the shape of gingerbread and a flask of *café au lait* with just a dash of gin, a most excellent and staying drink, by the way. Little attentions like these help vastly to hearten one when things are not going quite as well as they might. Then, too, the little terriers invariably excite the sympathy of ladies out with the field, and many a mile have tender arms carried little Venus. As for Nellie, she absolutely owes her life to a good sportswoman, who pluckily rescued her at a kill from amid the growling mass of hounds. They had pulled down their otter on land, running from scent to view before I could get to them.

There are, I am aware, differences of opinion among Masters touching the presence of ladies in the field, but, whatever may be said of fox-hunting, where the circumstances are very different, my opinion is that they are absolutely in place with otterhounds, and that they nowhere show to more advantage than beside the water in the blue, red, or green of the hunt uniform. And what an example they sometimes set us men!

I have known them stick to hounds until the last moment when these are called off, taking their place in the stickles or fords. I have seen them kneel down in the water rather than let an otter pass untallied. Many is the first welcome Tally ho ! from one of these ladies, quick of eye and swift of foot. The most remarkable performance of the kind that ever came to my notice was in Suffolk, on a day when, even at six in the morning, the heat was tropical. Hounds were a bit above themselves, and, as they dashed to water in the pride of the morning, they at once hit off a burning trail. Away they went full cry up stream, galloping past the front whip at a pace terrific to those who had only their feet to depend on. Horn and voice neither stopped nor yet steadied them, and, with such a burning scent they could hardly be blamed. To me came a lady, with a most business-like whip slung around her, and asked me if she should turn them to me. Too amazed to take the proposal seriously, I merely indicated Harlequin and Damper just disappearing round a bend in the dim distance. She assured me, however, that that was nothing, since she was used to running. She was. Back they all came, rough hound and smooth hound, and close behind them the lady herself, hot but triumphant. She had got to their heads. And only the day before she had come seventy miles on her bicycle to get to hounds. No wonder Whyte Melville said the race was in the ascendant !

The Master should be as familiar as possible with his hounds, and he will find indeed that this constitutes one of the most potent charms of otter-hunting. He

is always in their midst; he shares their difficulties and their toils. The endurance of man and hound is severely taxed, and their feet may be sorely hurt by such ordeals as five miles to the meet, a ten miles draw, and seven miles home. Sometimes you are in the water with them, wading or even swimming. Sometimes, if you think that they want blood—and *you* must be the best judge—you give them their otter; at others, you help find their quarry. They depend on their huntsman to show them sport; they love to hear his voice and horn cheering them to the echo. They know that he trusts them and they scorn to play him false. Out with them, home with them, not riding above their level on a horse whose heels they dread, but walking among them, beside them, where they can thrust their tan muzzles into your coat tails or into your hand, seeking the biscuit which they know by experience sometimes lurks there. Such a pack, as they look up in the Master's face, their eyes bright with love and confidence, will not require much whip. A crop and thong are not, as some folks seem to imagine, part and parcel of the proper outfit of a follower of otterhounds, though I have heard of a beagle pack of but ten couple being "aided" to hunt by no fewer than four whippers-in!

The Master will in some countries find hares, or "great joskins," as a Suffolk sportsman calls them, a nuisance, for they have a knack of jumping up in view when hounds have perhaps been drawing the whole day without a sniff of anything to hunt. Then, indeed, he longs for a horse on which to stop them. Otherwise,

I would far rather see hounds break away than be always rated and whipped in. Thus treated, they very rightly refuse to put their noses down and hunt and come back to their huntsman for protection. If, however, the Master has their confidence, they will turn and twist with their otter when they have found, and will, at a check, gladly cast themselves at his direction. Each piece of hound work may then be studied, for in hunting an otter there is ample scope for every hound to display his individual qualities.

Something has been said of the Master's difficulties, but nothing of his expenses, which is, after all, the subject of most interest for the beginner. The scale on which the thing is done varies in different ages. King John, the first Master of Otterhounds on record was attached to his pack and seems to have appreciated the niceties of the sport without much regard to economy. Edward II. also mastered a pack of six couple of "otter dogges," which were hunted by one Twici. As showing the scale on which establishments were maintained in those days, it may be noted that this same Twici was assisted by a couple of boys, who got three-halfpence each per diem as wages. Twici himself got twopence a day, besides an allowance of 4*s.* 8*d.* a year for shoes, and a robe of cloth yearly or a mark (13*s.* 4*d.*) in money. One more otter-hunting record from the Middle Ages shows that Henry VIII. also kept a pack of "otter dogs," with one Thomas Hordon as Master. A modern pack of otterhounds may vary considerably in strength. The Brookfield, for instance, recently numbered thirty couple, while

From a photograph by Purdie & Phillips, Chelmsford

ROUGH HOUNDS OF CHERITON AND ESSEX PACKS, 1902

PLATE XIII

the Rug pack boasted but nine. For most countries anything between ten and fifteen couple of hounds should be regarded as ample. After ten couple, indeed, every extra couple may be regarded as a luxury. At the same time, a good number of hounds will be found absolutely necessary in drawing both banks simultaneously of wide rivers, like the Tweed or Torridge.

I had a very good season in 1902 in Essex with only eleven couple, my hunting pack averaging eight and a half couple. Yet they did two, three, occasionally four days a week, accounting for fifteen out of twenty-seven otters "put off." Small packs are more handy and easier to control, but I confess to liking the look of a big pack except where, in small waters, they get in one another's way.

The cost of maintaining a pack of, say, fifteen couple is easily reckoned. First, there is the original cost of the hounds themselves. Such a pack may, according to circumstances, cost anything from £50 to £300 to buy, but a medium price of £200 should buy a decent pack. If the thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well, and there can be neither pleasure nor merit in turning out with a scratch lot of hounds, scratch in every sense of the word, and offensive to both eye and nose!

Then there are the licences: 7*s.* 6*d.* for each hound, though unentered hounds up to the age of twelve months are exempt.

As regards the important subject of feeding, the hounds will require, when in hard work, a three-quarter hundredweight bag of hound-meal each day.

This is merely broken biscuit and dried flesh and graves, and is for otterhounds, which have not, it must be remembered, got to do fast and long work, preferable to a diet of flesh and oatmeal. It fits them for their slow and steady hunting, keeping them on the big side and fortifying them against the cold waters that would nip and "starve" a fine-drawn hound in galloping trim. There are many makers, but, if I am to give my own preference, I should name Pike and Tucker of Bristol, who have given me every satisfaction for years. The meal varies somewhat with the maker. It is always apt to be a little heating and to scour hounds as well, and it may be made more palatable by the addition of a little broth from bullocks' or sheep's heads, and now and then a little horseflesh. Sheep's trotters, at sixpence a hundred, also make excellent broth. The whole of last spring and summer my hounds had no flesh, yet they kept hard and fit and big, and during the whole winter they had but two horses. Cabbage, mangolds (sparingly), and other green stuff may be useful and necessary adjuncts, particularly in the off-season, while sulphur and Epsom Salts should be the staple physic. Hound-meal, if bought by the ton for cash, costs £12 10*s.* or so, and it should be packed in hundredweight bags, being convenient in that form for taking about when hounds have to lie out, as you then know the exact number of feeds per bag, and only boiling-water is then required to make the hounds a warm meal after each day's work. Let me impress on the beginner that hounds should never be given a cold meal. They

like it warm as well as their masters, and they have worked as hard for it, and sometimes, indeed, harder. In the off-season a hundredweight bag should, well soaked and given sloppy, make nearly three feeds.

The remaining expenses are the cost of kennels, a variable quantity that can hardly be specified here, and the wages of Hunt servants. Beyond these there are only the slight expenses attending illness, and as most veterinary surgeons are kind enough to act as hon. vets. to the pack, these are confined to a yearly chemist's bill of, say, £10. The courts must be kept well washed with disinfectant, and this should also be liberally used in flushing the drains. Jeyes' Fluid, or some such compound, answers the purpose. Hounds should be brushed every day with an ordinary dandy-brush and gloved with one of Dinneford's hound gloves or with a chamois leather. Another requirement for kennels will be three or four tons of wheaten straw at from £2 to £4 per ton, according to season and locality. Coming to the question of servants and their wages, one man in kennel, who will also whip-in to you in the field, is all that is strictly necessary, but a kennel-boy is a useful addition to the staff. For whip, the very best man is one who has been brought up with hounds (in a foxhound kennel for preference, where things are done well) as feeder or kennel-man. He must be fond of his job, or he will be useless. Also, he must be sober, active, and strong. One of the greatest troubles in the life of Masters of Otterhounds is the manner in which the field will ply the Hunt servants with liquor. If they are not very strong-minded, and do not know

when to refuse, there is certain to be trouble all round. Wages vary from 15s. to 25s. a week, with a uniform that includes boots and stockings, and occasionally with house room as well. The whip entails taking out a 15s. licence, but no licence is necessary for the kennel-boy, and his wages run from 5s. to 10s. a week.

Such are the chief expenses in kennel. Hunting expenses vary in different countries, chiefly, of course, according to the number of days or weeks that the pack has to lie out. Every railway company will keep a proper hound-van for you, and for a two-horse fare (half-return) you can take any number of hounds anywhere. Horse-boxes are always draughty, and nearly always dirty into the bargain, so the Master should insist on having a proper hound-van, or, at least, an empty brake-van. It is often cheaper to van to and fro by train than to stay at an hotel, and hounds are naturally more comfortable at home. Most of the "fights," moreover, occur when hounds are kennelled in a strange place.

Glancing collectively at these expenses, we can see that no one can reasonably expect to do a pack of otterhounds on less than £350 a year. Indeed, £450 is nearer the mark, and the total expenditure may easily exceed even that figure. Subscriptions, a matter of moment to the new Master, vary considerably. The Culmstock get about £190, the Cheriton £190 to £200, the Essex about £230.

Claims for damage should be few, that is, so long as the members of the Hunt are careful to close gates after them, and also to avoid hay-grass or standing

OPENING MEET ESSEX OTTER HOUNDS, 1902

PLATE XIV

corn, but the wise Master who carries the horn himself, will have a field-master to give an eye to such details. He will also, let me repeat, treat his hounds as his best friends. I knew one man who never hesitated, when necessary, to swim with them. I myself have slept on the ground among them, when lying out, sooner than risk a fight.

CHAPTER X

THE MASTER OF HOUNDS IN HIS LIBRARY

Sporting bibliographies—"Annals of Horsemanship"—Beckford's "Thoughts on Hunting"—William Somerville—"The Chase"—Mr. Apperley's works—Mr. Surtees—List of his best known books—Some sporting magazines and serials—Encyclopædias—Juliana Berners—Georgina Bowers—Other books: Authors unknown—Mr. Delme Radcliffe—"Brooksby"—"Stonehenge"—"Cecil"—Mr. Warburton—Lord Ribblesdale—Mr. Blew—"Scrutator"—"Wanderer"—Mr. Finch Mason—"Thormanby"—Whyte Melville

CHARLES LAMB declared that his favourite recreation was to be "in a nook with a book," and my experience is that such is the favourite recreation of Masters of Hounds after a long day in the open air. But unless they are students of bibliography, they can have no knowledge of the prices which they should pay for their books. In "Illustrated Sporting Books" (published by Upcott Gill), Mr. Slater has reduced sporting bibliography to an exact science; but, as his work partakes of the nature of a catalogue, which deals with books relating to all branches of sport, I have, with his permission, made certain extracts which relate to fox-hunting. I have purposely omitted many books, such as the hunting portions of the Badminton Library and

the novels of Major Whyte-Melville, because they are so well known as to require no comment from my pen; nor shall I refer to Mr. Slater's appendix of sporting prints, since in my own belief—and I have had many transactions with them—Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, would deal with the purchaser as fairly, and as cheaply, as he would be dealt with in the auction-room. But it is only from the auction-room that we can learn the market value of old sporting books.

Few authors are better known to hunting-men than the author of:

"Annals of Horsemanship." By Geoffrey Gambado (H. W. Bunbury), 1st ed., 1791. 4to. With 17 engravings after H. W. Bunbury.

Little is known of the personality of "Gambado," except that he was renowned in the county of Suffolk for his public and private virtues, and, besides being an author, was a celebrated caricaturist. He was also M.D. and F.R.S., though, certainly, he was very unlike a modern physician. He wrote in regard to himself:

"I seek no fame, I want no name,
My bread in Bread Street is;
Gambado has sufficient fame—
This is sufficient bliss."

Mr. Bunbury was born in Bread Street, I should add. His chief works are:

"An Academy for Grown Horsemen. By "Geoffrey Gambado" (H. W. Bunbury), and "Annals of Horsemanship," by the same, 1781–91. 2 vols., 4to. The

"Academy" contains 12 plates, and the "Annals of Horsemanship" 17, and all after H. W. Bunbury.

Another edition, 1808. 4to. Plates as before.

Another edition, 1809. 8vo. 29 coloured plates by Rowlandson.

Another edition, 1812. Folio. 29 coloured plates.

Another edition, n.d. 8vo. Ackermann. 29 coloured plates by Rowlandson and others.

An edition of 1822, in 2 vols., roy. 4to., is of no importance, and of but little value. The plates are reduced copies.

Further information in regard to this eccentric doctor can be found in *Geoffrey Gambado, by a Humourist Physician*, a rare book, though only published in 1865.

Peter Beckford died on February 18, 1811, and was buried at Stapleton, in Dorset. Over his grave are these lines:

> "We die and are forgotten; 'Tis Heaven's decree;
> Thus the fate of others will be the fate of me."

But Peter Beckford's name will never be forgotten, for he was the first English writer to describe minutely and accurately the system of fox-hunting, and the work quoted below is still regarded as an authority. He was also an eminent scholar, and it was said of him by Sir Egerton Brydges that "he would bag a fox in Greek, find a hare in Latin, inspect his kennels in Italian, and direct the economy of his

stables in exquisite French." His son was created third Lord Rivers, in 1802, by special patent, Peter Beckford having married, in 1802, a daughter of Lord Rivers. I should add that he was an M.F.H. and M.P. for Morpeth.

"Thoughts on Hunting, in a series of Familiar Letters to a Familiar Friend." By Peter Beckford, 1st ed., 1781. Small 4to. Frontispiece by Bartolozzi (Diana preparing for the chase), and plans of Kennels. Sarum.

Second edition, 1782. 4to. Frontispiece.

Third edition, 1796. 8vo. 20 plates (1st illustrated edition).

Fourth edition, 1802. 4to. Pp. 360. Frontispiece by Bartolozzi.

Another edition, 1810. 8vo. With 11 plates by Scott, and woodcut by Bewick on title.

Another edition, 1820. 8vo. Frontispiece and numerous vignette cuts by Bewick.

Another edition, 1840. 12mo. With a chapter on "Coursing."

Another edition, 1879. 8vo.

Another edition, 1881. 8vo. Pp. xi–261.

Henry Alken flourished between 1816 and 1831. He is said to have been originally huntsman, stud-groom, or trainer to the Duke of Beaufort, and at first published anonymously under the signature of "Ben Tallyho"; but in 1816 he published under his own

name. The following are his best known hunting engravings:

Alken's Sketches
Analysis of the Hunting Field
Annals of Sporting
Beauties, &c., of the Horse
Books of Sports
British Proverbs
Chase, the Turf and the Road
Collection of Sporting Designs
Cracks of the Day
Down the Road
Driving Discoveries
Fashion and Folly
Few Ideas, A
High Mettled Racer
How to Qualify
Hunting
Hunting Reminiscences
Hunting Sketches
Jorrock's Jaunts and Jollities
Life of John Mytton
Melange of Humour
Moments of Fancy
National Sports
New Scrap Book
New Sketch Book
Notitia Venatica
Popular Songs
Qualified Horses
Scraps from the Sketch Book
Sketch Book
Sketches
Specimens of Riding
Sporting Notions
Sporting Repository
Sporting Review
Sporting Satirist
Sporting Scenes
Sporting Scrap Book
Sporting Sketches
Steeple Chase, The
Symptoms
Touch at the Fine Arts
Tutor's Assistant

The fertility of Alken's pen was amazing, and in his work there is a freedom of handling which rendered his work very popular in his day. One of his water-

colour sketches, entitled "Fox Hunting," is in the South Kensington Museum. The following are his most important works:

"Notitia Venatica: a Treatise on Fox Hunting." By Robert Thomas Vyner. 1st ed. 1841. 8vo. Illustrated by H. Alken.

Another edition. 1847. 8vo.

Another edition. 1892. Royal 8vo, enlarged by W. C. A. Blew. Coloured plates by H. Alken and others.

The sixth edition appeared without date, by 1871. 8vo. The "Steeple Chase," a series of 6 oblong folio coloured plates. By Henry Alken.

"Hunting Sketches." 1859. Oblong folio. 6 coloured plates, after Alken.

"Hunting; or, Six Hours' Sport." By Three Real Good Ones.

Six coloured plates by H. Alken. 1823. 4to.

Alken's Sketches: "The Stable," "The Road," "The Park," "The Field." 1st ed. 1854. Oblong folio. A series of 6 coloured sporting subjects. By Henry Alken.

"How to Qualify for a Meltonian," addressed to all would-be Meltonians. A series of 6 large coloured plates. By Henry Alken. 1819. Oblong folio.

Though William Somerville died at Edstone on July 17, 1742, editions of his principal work, "The Chase," have appeared in constant succession during the present century, so I append the most valuable

editions. An edition, however, was published as lately as 1896, with illustrations by Mr. Hugh Thomson. Full details of his life are to be found in the "Dictionary of National Biography," and in the works of Shenstone, who describes him as improvident and an intemperate drinker. Dr. Johnson mentions him in his "Lives of the Poets."

"The Chase." By William Somerville. 1st ed. 1735. 4to. Not illustrated.

Of the numerous illustrated editions which have appeared from time to time the best is that published in 1802, 8vo, with full-page plates, after Sartorius, and woodcuts by Bewick.

Bulmer's edition of 1796, 4to, with woodcuts by Bewick, is, however, preferable in many respects, especially when on large paper.

The third edition, with Bewick's cuts, was published by Bulmer in 1804. Royal 8vo.

I regret that I have been unable to discover any reliable facts in regard to the life of the author of "Cynegetica; or, Essays on Sporting . . ." By William Blane. 1788. 8vo. Frontispiece and vignettes by Stothard. In this work Somerville's "Chase," is inserted.

This book is, in effect, a new edition of "Essays on Hunting," published in 1781. 8vo. And

"Essays on Hunting," containing a Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature and Properties of the Scent, &c. Edited by William Blane. 1st ed. (1781.) 8vo.

Pp. xxviii. 135. Extracted from an "Essay on Hunting." By a Country Squire. A second edition of this book, with "The Method of Hare Hunting Practised by the Greeks," by a Sportsman of Berkshire, appeared without date (but ? 1782). See "Cynegetica; Essays on Hunting."

Having previously referred to Mr. Apperley, it is only necessary now to mention his principal works.

"The Chase, The Turf, and The Road." By "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1837. Demy 8vo. Portrait of "Nimrod" by Maclise and 13 full-page plates (uncoloured) by H. Alken. Reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*. A later edition of 1870 has the plates coloured.

Another edition. 1898. Royal 16mo. Illustrations by Alken, portrait by Maclise, and other portraits. Published in the "Sportsman Library" series.

"The Horse and the Hound." By "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1st ed. 1842. Crown 8vo, with engraved frontispiece by Dobbie. 7 full-page coloured plates and cuts by Alken.

Second edition. 1843. 8vo.

"Hunting Reminiscences"; comprising Memoirs of Masters of Hounds, &c. By "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1843. Demy 8vo. 32 uncoloured full-page plates and maps by Wildrake, Alken, and Henderson.

"The Life of a Sportsman." By "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1842. Demy 8vo. With 36 coloured plates by H. Alken.

"Memoirs of the Life of the Late John Mytton, Esq., of Halston." By "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1st ed. 1835. 8vo. 12 coloured plates by H. Alken.

Second edition. 1837. 8vo. 18 coloured plates (8 new) by H. Alken and Rawlins.

Third edition, and the first really complete, as it contains a Memoir of the Author not in the preceding two. 1851. 8vo.

Fourth and fifth editions. 1869. 8vo. Routledge. With the 18 coloured plates. An edition of 1877. 8vo. Routledge, 18 coloured plates. Also an edition of 1892. 8vo. Routledge.

"Sporting." Edited by "Nimrod" (C. J. Apperley). 1838. Imperial 4to. 38 steel plates and woodcuts, after Gainsborough, Landseer, and others; text by Tom Hood and others.

"Remarks on the Condition of Hunters, the Choice of Horses, &c." By C. J. Apperley ("Nimrod"). 1831. Demy 8vo; mentioned here because though the book contains no illustrations in its normal state, 12 plates by Turner are often found inserted. Later editions are of no consequence.

The best known works of Mr. Surtees are:

"Analysis of the Hunting Field." By R. S. Surtees. 1846. Oblong 8vo. with coloured title, 6 coloured plates and 43 cuts, all by H. Alken. The papers reprinted in this volume appeared in *Bell's Life* during 1845–6.

"Ask Mamma; or, the Richest Commoner in England." By the Author of "Handley Cross" (R. S. Surtees). 1858. Originally published in 13 monthly parts; red wrappers designed by Leech; afterwards in demy 8vo, as above. Frontispiece, 12 coloured plates, 69 woodcuts, all by Leech.

Another edition, n.d. (but 1888). Bradbury Agnew, and Co. With the coloured plates.

"Handley Cross; or, Mr. Jorrocks' Hunt." By the Author of Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour (R. S. Surtees), n.d. (but 1854). Published in 17 parts (March 1853 to October 1854), in red wrappers designed by Leech; afterwards in demy 8vo, as above. Contains 17 coloured plates and 84 woodcuts by Leech.

Another edition, n.d. (1888). Bradbury Agnew, and Co. Coloured plates by Wildrake and others.

"Handley Cross; or, The Spa Hunt." Another novel by Surtees, first published in 3 vols. Post 8vo. 1843. Is not illustrated.

"Hawbuck Grange; or, The Sporting Adventures of Thomas Scott, Esq." By the Author of "Handley Cross; or, The Spa Hunt" (R. S. Surtees). 1847. Demy 8vo. With 8 full-page etchings by "Phiz."

Another edition, n.d. (1884.) With coloured reprints of the plates. This series of sketches appeared in *Bell's Life* during the winter season of 1846–7.

"Hillingdon Hall; or, The Cockney Squire." By the Author of "Handley Cross" (R. S. Surtees). 1845. 3 vols. Post 8vo. This 1st ed. is not illustrated.

Another edition. 1888. 8vo. With 12 coloured plates by Wildrake and others.

"Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities . . ." By R. S. Surtees. 1838. 8vo. Originally published in the New Sporting Magazine (July 1831 to September 1834.)

Afterwards in volume form as above. Contains 12 full-page plates by "Phiz."

Another edition. 1839. 8vo. 12 plates as before.

Another edition. 1843. 8vo. With title and 14 plates and Title by H. Alken, all coloured.

Another edition. 1869. 8vo. With the coloured plates as before. This edition contains the extra papers, "A Ride to Brighton," "A Week at Cheltenham," and "The Day after the Feast."

Another edition. 1874. 8vo. 16 coloured plates by H. Alken.

"Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds." By the Author of "Handley Cross" (R. S. Surtees). 1865. Originally issued in 12 parts; red wrappers designed by Leech; afterwards in demy 8vo, as above. Contains 24 coloured plates, the first 14 by Leech and the remainder by "Phiz."

"Plain or Ringlets?" By the Author of "Handley Cross" (R. S. Surtees). 1860. Originally published in 13 monthly parts, in red wrappers designed by Leech; afterwards in demy 8vo, as above. First title, and 13 plates in colours, 44 woodcuts, all by Leech.

Another edition, n.d. (but 1888). Bradbury, Agnew, and Co. With Leech's coloured plates and cuts.

"Sponge's Sporting Tour." By the Author of "Handley Cross" (R. S. Surtees). 1853. Originally published in 13 monthly parts; red wrappers designed by Leech; afterwards in demy 8vo, as above. Contains

13 coloured plates and numerous woodcuts, all by Leech.

Another edition. 1860. 8vo.

Another edition, n.d. 1888. Coloured plates by Wildrake and others.

Bell's Life and *The Field* are known to all hunting-men, but the following books, all with some interest for hunting-folk, may not be so well known, since forgetfulness is the recognised inheritance of posterity. Still, they will repay investigation.

"The Sporting Repository; Horse Racing, Hunting, Coursing, Shooting, Pugilism, &c." 1822. 8vo. McLean. 19 coloured plates by Henry Alken.

"The Sporting Review: a Monthly Chronicle of the Turf, the Chase, &c." Edited by "Craven." Illustrations by H. Alken and others. This serial commenced in 1839.

"The Sporting Magazine; or, Monthly Calendar of the Turf, the Chase, &c." Illustrations. This series commenced in 1792.

"The Sporting Mirror." Edited by "Diomed," 1881–6. Complete in 10 vols. 8vo. Portraits.

"Sporting Notions," n.d. Oblong 4to. 20 coloured plates by Henry Alken.

"The Sporting Oracle, and Almanack of Rural Life," for 1841. Edited by "Vates." 12 whole-page sporting plates by R. B. Davis.

This periodical was afterwards incorporated in "The

Sporting Almanack," which was then produced as the "Sporting Almanack and Oracle of Rural Life." 1842–4. 8vo.

"Encyclopædia of Rural Sports." By D. P. Blaine. 1st. ed. 1840. 8vo. With over 600 engravings by Leech, Alken, Landseer, and others.

Another edition. 1852. 8vo. By "Ephemera" (Edward Fitzgibbon) and others, with over 600 engravings on wood.

Another edition. 1858. 8vo. Illustrated from drawings by Leech.

Another edition, 1870. 8vo. Illustrated from drawings by Leech.

Another edition. 8vo. 1880. Engravings by Leech, Alken, and others.

"The Encyclopædia of Sport." Edited by the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, Hedley Peek, and F. G. Aflalo. Complete in two vols. Vol. I.—A to LEO. 1897. Imperial 8vo. With 20 full-page photogravures and several hundred illustrations in the text.

The following book, which was reproduced by Mr. Blades in 1881, is merely of interest as a curio. Those who believe that "old books must be loved and their idiosyncrasies carefully studied," will appreciate it, though to my eyes the old print is illegible. Mr. Blades' reproduction is published by Mr. Elliot Stock, of 62 Paternoster Row. It is an excellent specimen of mediæval typography, but very hard to decipher.

"Bokys of Haukyng and Huntyng, and also of Cootarmuris." By Juliana Barnes or Berners. 1st ed. St. Albans. 1486. Reproduced in facsimile, with an Introduction by William Blades. 1881. 4to.

Second edition. 1496. Folio, with woodcuts, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, under the title, "Treatyse perteynynge to Hawkynge, Huntynge, and Fysshynge with an Angle."

Reprinted (150 copies only), with an Introduction by Joseph Haslewood. 1810. Folio. And also by Watkins in 1880. 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Wynkyn de Worde. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Wyllyam Coplande. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Wyllyam Coplande for Robert Toye. Small 4to.

Another edition. n.d. Wyllyam Coplande for Richard Tottell. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Abraham Vele. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Hery Tab. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. John Waley. Small 4to.

Another edition, n.d. Wyllyam Powell. Small 4to.

Another edition. 1586. 4to. Edward Alde. Printed under the title "Hawking, Hunting, Fowling, and Fishing with the True Measures of Blowing."

Another edition. 1596. 4to. Adam Islip. Printed under the same title as the edition of 1586.

All the above mentioned copies are extremely scarce.

The name of Georgina Bowers will be familiar to most of my readers. I have never had the pleasure of

meeting her in the hunting-field, though we have had pleasant correspondence. Her work deserves a place in a sportsman's library.

"Hunting in Hard Times," n.d. (1889.) Oblong folio, with letterpress and 20 humorous coloured plates. By Georgina Bowers.

"Leaves from a Hunting Journal." 1880. Oblong 4to. 20 large plates with lithographed text. By Georgina Bowers.

"Notes from a Hunting Box." By Georgina Bowers. 1873. Oblong folio. Illustrations.

The following book is anonymous, but should be on the shelves of every hunting-man:

"How Pippins Enjoyed a Day with the —— Foxhounds." 1863. Folio. Illustrated title and 12 large coloured lithographic plates by "Phiz."

Mr. A. E. Pease won the House of Commons Point to Point Race in 1891 on Nora Creina, on which he had ridden second in the race of 1890. In his younger days he was Master of the Cambridge drag. His portrait on Nora Creina forms the frontispiece to "Hunting Reminiscences."

"The Cleveland Hounds as a Trencher-Fed Pack." By A. E. Pease. 1887. 8vo. Coloured portrait of Tom Andrews, and plates. Pp. viii + 257.

"Hunting Reminiscences." By A. E. Pease. 1898.

8vo. Illustrations, including two based upon sketches by Sir Frank Lockwood.

The authors of the next five works are, with the exception of "Triviata," unknown to me; but I have perused their works, and consider them worthy of notice in these pages.

"Reminiscences of the late Thomas Assheton-Smith, Esq." By Sir John Eardley Wilmot. 1860. Post 8vo. With 10 portraits and plates by Cooper and others.

Second edition. 1860. Post 8vo. Portrait and plates.

Another edition. 1862. 8vo. Revised.

"Reminiscences of a Huntsman." By G. C. G. F. Berkeley. 1854. 8vo. Coloured and plain illustrations by Leech.

This work is included (vol. 4) in Maxwell's "The Sportsman's Library." 1896. Some copies were printed on large paper.

"A Diary of Fifteen Years' Hunting, from 1796 to 1811." By John Beard. 1813. 12mo. Pp. vii. + 292. Woodcuts.

"Triviata; or, Cross-road Chronicles of Passages in Irish Hunting History, during the season of 1875–6." By Maurice O'Connor Morris. 1877. 8vo. Illustrations.

The following is one of the few books which is not in the catalogue of the British Museum:

"Meynellian Science of Fox Hunting upon System." By Hawkes. 1st edition privately printed, n.d. (? 1802.) Mr. Meynell died at the beginning of the present century, and this book appears to have been printed shortly after his death.

Another edition. 1848. 8vo.

Mr. Delme Radcliffe was Master of the Hertfordshire Hunt from 1836 till about 1839, when he made way for Mr. Brand, afterwards Lord Dacre. He was a man of refined taste, a scholar, and a great reader. In the work noticed below he has proved himself to be possessed of a fluent style, a wide vocabulary, and an intimate acquaintance with the writings of the best authors. The enlarged edition by Mr. W. C. A. Blew is the best.

"The Noble Science." By F. P. Delme Radcliffe, 1st ed. 1839. 8vo. D. Bogue. Illustrations. Most copies were issued with cut and gilt edges, and these are of less value.

Another edition. 1839. 8vo. Bohn.

Fourth edition. 1893. 8vo. Enlarged by W. C. A. Blew. Pp. xxviii + 331. With 10 steel plates coloured by hand and 35 woodcuts in the text.

It is only necessary for me to pay a tribute of regard to "Brooksby," who, like many another good fellow, relinquished the pleasures of the hunting-field to fight

for his country in South Africa. His contributions to *The Field* and to *Baily's Magazine* are familiar to all hunting-men. His best volume work is:

"The Cream of Leicestershire," "Eleven Seasons' Skimmings," "Notable Runs and Incidents of the Chase." By "Brooksby" (Edward Pennell-Elmhirst). 1893. 8vo. Pp. xvi + 435, with coloured and other illustrations by Sturgess. Portraits and a map.

"Foxhound, Forest, and Prairie." By "Brooksby" (Edward Pennell-Elmhirst). 1892. Royal 8vo. Coloured plates and woodcuts by Sturgess and Marsham.

I should add, however, that the reproduction of his articles in *The Field*, anent the hunting countries of England, is one of the most useful books of reference that I have had the pleasure of referring to.

"The Horse in the Stable and the Field." By "Stonehenge" (J. H. Walsh). 1861. 8vo. Illustrations.

There are many editions of this well-known work; a thirteenth appeared in 1890. 8vo. Pp. x + 622.

The author of the above work is too well known to require comment.

Few men have done more for fox-hunting literature than Mr. Cornelius Tongue, better known as "Cecil." The Stud Farm is still an authority on the breeding of hunters, and should be read by every breeder.

"Hunting Tours, Descriptions of Various Fashionable Countries and Establishments, &c." By "Cecil" (Cornelius Tongue). 1864. Post 8vo. Coloured frontispiece.

"Records of the Chase, and Memoirs of Celebrated Sportsmen." By "Cecil" (Cornelius Tongue). 1854. 12mo. Plates.

Another edition. 1877. 8vo.

Another edition. 1880. 8vo.

"Stable Practice; or, Hints on Training for the Turf, the Chase, and the Road." By "Cecil" (Cornelius Tongue). 1852. Post 8vo.

"The Stud Farm; or, Hints on Breeding for the Turf, the Chase, and the Road . . ." By "Cecil" (Cornelius Tongue). 1873. F'cap. 8vo. Frontispiece.

As Mr. Warburton only died at Arley Hall on December 6, 1891, his memory is still green. He was an ardent fox-hunter, riding thoroughbred horses bred by himself. His verses were originally written to amuse himself and his friends.

"Hunting Songs, Ballads, &c." By Rowland Eyles Egerton Warburton. 1st ed. 1834. 8vo. Coloured portrait and plates.

Another edition. 1846. 4to. Illustrations.

Another edition. 1855. Oblong 8vo. With four etchings by "Phiz."

Another edition. 1859. 8vo. An important edition, as it differs considerably from the preceding ones.

Another edition. 1877. Two vols. 8vo.

"Three Hunting Songs." By Rowland Eyles Egerton Warburton. 1855. Oblong 8vo. 4 plates by "Phiz." Only 250 copies printed.

The two following books are worthy of mention, though they cannot claim to have been published within the nineteenth century. They should be on the shelves of every sporting library:

"An Essay on Hunting." By A Country Squire. 1733. 8vo. Frontispiece and vignettes.

Reprint. By Smeaton. 1820. 8vo. Frontispiece and vignettes.

"The Art of Hunting." By William Twici, huntsman to King Edward II. Translated by H. Dryden. 1844. 4to. Nine illustrations. Only 25 copies privately printed.

The two books to which I have now to refer, though different in their characters, will always be considered authoritative works of reference. I will not enlarge upon the many and various arguments which have been publicly expressed in regard to the Royal Buck Hounds. The opinions of Lord Ribblesdale are of far more value than any that I could offer. In regard to Mr. Blew's book on the Quorn Hunt, it resembles all of Mr. Blew's works. It is written by a conscientious gentleman.

"The Queen's Hounds and Stag-hunting Recollections." By Lord Ribblesdale. With an Introduction on the Hereditary Mastership by Edward Burrows. 1897. Royal 8vo. Pp. 332. 25 photogravure plates and 37 half-tone plates. 150 copies on large paper (4to.).

"The Quorn Hunt and its Masters." By William C. A. Blew. 1898. Super-royal 8vo. With 12 hand-coloured illustrations of the Quorn country, and 12 head and tail-pieces, all by Henry Alken. This work is uniform with the same Author's editions of Vyner's "Notitia Venatica" and Radcliffe's "Noble Science of Fox-hunting."

I have been unable to discover any details in regard to the personality of "Harry Hieover" (Mr. Charles Brindley). Therefore I only append his books which I consider to be the best.

"The Hunting Field." By "Harry Hieover" (Charles Brindley). 1850. 8vo. Frontispiece.

"Stable Talk and Table Talk; or, Spectacles for Young Sportsmen." By "Harry Hieover" (Charles Brindley). 1845–6. 2 vols. 8vo.

"The Stud, for Practical Purposes and Practical Men." By "Harry Hieover" (Charles Brindley). 1849. 12mo. Plates.

Another edition. 1858. F'cap. 8vo.

"The Sporting World." By "Harry Hieover" (Charles Brindley). 1858. F'cap. 8vo. Frontispiece.

"Scrutator" and "Wanderer" were both well-known authors in their time. I append what I consider to be their best books without comment, though I must add that they are worthy of perusal, and should adorn every hunting-man's library.

"Horses and Hounds: A Practical Treatise on their Management." By "Scrutator" (K. W. Horlock). 1855. 8vo.

"The Master of the Hounds." By "Scrutator" (K. W. Horlock). 1859. 3 vols. Post 8vo. Illustrations by Harrison Weir.

"Recollections of a Fox-hunter." By "Scrutator" (K. W. Horlock.) 1861. 8vo. Frontispiece.

"Across Country." By "Wanderer." 1882. 8vo. Coloured plates.

"Fair Diana." By "Wanderer." 1st ed. 1884. 8vo. Pp. viii + 360. With 22 coloured plates by Georgina Bowers.

"A Loose Rein." By "Wanderer" n.d. 1886. 8vo. Pp. viii + 352. With coloured plates by Georgina Bowers.

Mr. Finch Mason is probably known to my readers as a water-sketch artist rather than as an author. Yet he has done as good work with his pen as he has done with his pencil and brush. I append notices of the two works which I consider to be his best, though I think that his stories and illustrations in *Fores' Magazine* are superior to his volume work.

"Humours of the Hunting Field." By G. Finch Mason, n.d. (1886.) Oblong folio. Illustrations.

"Sporting Recollections." By G. Finch Mason. 1885. 8vo. Pp. xv. 200. With 102 illustrations.

My wish is that Messrs. Fores would publish Mr. Finch Mason's stories in volume form, for they would be a valuable addition to a sportsman's library. Let me take this opportunity of stating how much I am indebted to Mr. Finch Mason for his illustrations to the stories from my pen which have appeared in *Fores' Magazine*.

I hardly know how to write about my friend "Thormanby" (Mr. Wilmott Dixon), for he would be the first man to censure me if I treated him with any extravagant praise in these pages. As a friend and brother author I have the deepest regard for him, as have all of us who have the pleasure of his acquaintance. Mr. Dixon and myself possess many things in common, the chief of which are Rugby reminiscences. Mr. Dixon's contribution to hunting literature deserves the highest praise, for it is the work of a conscientious author, who has done his best to contribute to the literature of fox-hunting.

"Kings of the Hunting-Field; Memoirs and Anecdotes of Distinguished Masters of Hounds and other Celebrities of the Chase, with Histories of Famous Packs, and Hunting Traditions of Great Houses." By "Thormanby" (Wilmott Dixon). 1898. Demy 8vo. With 32 portraits.

I regret that I have only been able to place before my readers a bird's-eye view of what has always proved

to me a most delightful and interesting study; but I think that I have demonstrated that fox-hunters do not possess those uncultivated minds with which they have been endowed by the enemies of sport. *Mens sana in corpore sano* is the primary rule of life with all sporting authors who have won any renown. They have not been carpet-slippered men, sitting in their studies over tobacco smoke, but men who have gained practical experience in the hunting-field. That men holding such high positions in society, as the late Duke of Beaufort and the late Earl of Suffolk, should have deemed it an accession to their dignity to join the ranks sporting literature; that men, to whom money was no object, should have employed their leisure time in writing about their favourite pursuit; and that men to whom money was an object should have found hunting literature to be both a congenial and a profitable pursuit, as is witnessed by the large number of editions of their works, proves beyond all doubt that fox-hunting still holds a firm grasp on the affections of the English reading public, in spite of the evil prognostications of those faddists to whom any outdoor healthy exercise is a bugbear. But the popularity of hunting literature is not only due to the love of fox-hunting. With few exceptions the books which I have mentioned betray signs of classical scholarship, which we rarely perhaps find in the bibliography of any other subject. The novels of Major Whyte-Melville have been read by thousands of people who have never been on the back of a horse. The same is the case with the novels of Mr. Surtees. In the case of both authors, cheap

editions have been called for by the general reading public within the last few years. I have heard it gravely stated that hunting books lack refinement. This accusation I wish to repudiate in the strongest terms, for it is a gross libel on the authors. One might just as well say that the "Pickwick Papers" lack refinement because Mr. Pickwick occasionally got drunk, or that Shakespeare's plays lack refinement. Yet the people who complain of the vulgarity of Mr. Jorrocks will eagerly devour the problem novels of the modern female novelists. In conclusion, I must apologise to many living authors for not having alluded to them and their work, and especially to those authors who have written the histories of the hunting countries of which they have had experience, for their histories invariably show signs of deep research involving long labour. I must, however, compliment the compilers of Baily's Fox-hunting Directory on the usefulness of their work. Whether or not the twentieth century is to produce its quota of healthy hunting literature depends in great measure on the attitude of Masters of Hounds. But for the help so freely given by many of them, many volumes must have been left unwritten.

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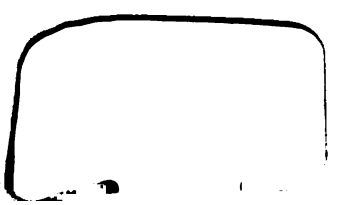

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